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P R A Y E R

I N

I N T E R T E S T A M E N T A L L I T E R A T U R E

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PRAYER

IN

INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

There are several possible sources for our knowledge concerning prayer in the life of the intertestamental Jews. From their faith in an accessible, yet transcendent, God--so evident in all writings of the period--it might be deduced that they would be a people of prayer. Likewise, by a careful study of Jewish rituals we might observe their faith in prayer and the style and structure of their supplications. But the most valuable source of information is the general literature of the period. In books of history, apocalyptic, wisdom, and religious-tale, prayers occur in abundance. Because these are prophetic, spontaneous, and unstudied prayers, they give a richer portrayal of the true life of these people than do the formal, ritualistic supplications that have been composed and phrased with care. It is to an examination of the former types of supplication that we must turn for an accurate picture of Jewish prayer-life.

Two things need be remembered, however. Many of the supplications which appear in the literature itself are essentially ritualistic. On the other hand, some of the lovely prayers which have been incorporated in the Jewish prayer books were originally spontaneous utterances which have, because of their rhetorical and religious worth, been preserved as part of the liturgy. By a perusal of these latter, then, we can obtain some insight into the nature of spontaneous prayers, while from many of the supposedly informal, spontaneous ones, little can be gained because they are actually ritualistic. Nevertheless, this paper, while not ignoring the liturgical prayers, will concentrate upon the several

supplications interspersed within the less devotional general literature of the period.

Although little will be said about either the Old or the New Testament, it must not be forgotten that the purpose of this paper is to discover the prayer-life in relation to the earlier Hebraism and the later Christianity. It was a period between these Testaments which saw many of the concepts of ancient Israel come to fruition and which laid the background for much of the New Testament. Neither of the canonical Testaments displays prayers so prominently as does the literature under observation. Yet petitions are implied throughout these two former collections of writings. Both Testaments include prayers, but it is in the intertestamental period that the greater number of them appear. We read that Jesus retired to solitary spots to pray, but little is recorded concerning the nature of these supplications. We know astonishingly little about their contents and phraseology. But the experiences of the Jews had established prayer as one of the tenets of their faith. They did not hesitate to petition the Lord, and in home, synagogue, and private meditation, supplications were frequent. The intertestamental literature, of all others, was the most filled with prayers. The Jews rewrote their ancient history and portrayed the patriarchs and prophets as devout men of prayer. Believing profoundly in the efficacy of supplications, they trusted in the accessibility of God, and experienced Him personally in their prayer-life. Therefore, one is warranted in turning to this literature for expression of the Jewish belief in prayer and for examples of actual supplications which they offered.

THE FREQUENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF PRAYERS IN EACH OF THE BOOKS OF THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

To generalize about the prayer-life of any people is difficult. Nearly every race of mankind offers some form of supplication to the Power or Powers which it believes to control its destiny. The Jews, as a peculiarly religious people, are surely no exception. They had faith that God was an accessible Being, who has chosen Israel for His own and would care for her throughout history. Any people with such a faith might be expected not only to worship formally, but to pray. Without studying the literature of the intertestamental period, therefore, one might predict that many prayers could be found there and that they would exhibit a highly-developed religious life. But such general statements can shed little light upon the distinctive and unique qualities of prayer in this era. Only by observing the literary products, examining both the number and nature of the actual supplications as well as the references to them, can the Jewish life of prayer in the period between the Testaments be fully comprehended. Further, any development or retrogression in the concept and use of prayers during the course of nearly three hundred years under examination, can most likely be made apparent by discussing the various writings in chronological order, beginning with Tobit (200-175 B.C.) and ending with IV Ezra (100 A.D.).

The entire plot in the Book of Tobit centers around two prayers, one uttered by Tobit (3:1-6) and the other by Sarah (3:11-16). It is in response to these two supplications that the angel Raphael arrives to guide Tobias on his journey to visit Gabael. Both Tobit and Sarah, in

their perplexity and sorrow, pray for deliverance from their woes, even by death if need be. The supplications are virtually equal in length, but Sarah's is concrete and personal, while Tobit's is more expansive and general, even including some recognition that his sins are related to the transgressions of the "fathers." The petition is the same in both instances, however: i.e., if God will not deliver them, then let Him take their lives. Tobit, a righteous Jew who has become blind, prays to God sorrowfully when his wife brings home a kid that he fears she has stolen. In the prayer he confesses his transgression and those of his forefathers, asking that he may die. On the same day Sarah is reproached by her father's maids for having married seven times, only to have each husband die on the wedding night. Being thus falsely accused of murder, she determines upon suicide but decides to pray instead. She praises God, professes her innocence, and requests either death or deliverance. Immediately the two prayers are answered. Around the divine response to these petitions the plot is woven.

In all, Kaufmann Kohler lists three prayers in Tobit: i.e., 3:1ff; 8:5ff; 13:1-18.[1] But others may well be added to this list. After he has married Sarah, Tobias makes a smoke of the heart and liver of the fish which he has previously caught in the River Tigris and drives away the demon which has slain his bride's former husbands. Thereupon, the bride and groom pray to God for mercy.[2] The next morning, when Raguel, the father of Sarah, sees his new son-in-law still alive, he utters a fervent supplication of praise and thanksgiving.[3] Although no prayers are

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[1]Kaufmann Kohler, The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929).

[2]The Book of Tobit 8:5-7. [3]The Book of Tobit 8:16f.

actually uttered in Chapter 12, Raphael, while revealing himself to Tobit and Tobias, urges them to pray and give thanks, saying, "It is a good thing to bless God and exalt His name, declaring God's works and doing them honor, so do not be slow to give Him thanks."[1] The great prayer of thanksgiving which Tobit utters in joy over his cure and the good fortune of his son constitutes the whole content of Chapter 13. Because of the happy issue of the story, therefore, "the old man let his soul go out to God in a hymn of prayerful thanksgiving."[2] Although Walker here calls this a "hymn," we follow the lead of Kohler in listing it with the other prayers. So as 3:2-6; 3:11b-15; 8:5-7; 8:16f.; and 13:1-18 actual supplications are recorded, while in Chapter 13 men are urged to pray. Thus petitions in the book are numerous, beautiful, and well-developed. Strict petition is, however, at a minimum, while prayers of unselfish intercession, praise, and thanksgiving are predominant. The whole of the book is "pervaded with a mysticism which finds its highest expression in heart-felt prayer as the immediate means of communion with God."[3] The author, believing in the efficacy of supplication to God, gives numerous illustrations of prayers effectively answered.

The Wisdom of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus (180 B.C.), although one of the longer books of the Apocrypha, contains only three actual prayers. The first comes at 23:1-4, where, although the typical prayer-forms are absent, Sirach directs his words to God and asks protection from his own idle tongue, from ignorance, and from sensuality. Although Kohler does not consider these verses to constitute a prayer, they shall be entitled such, because they are preceded and followed by exhortations

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[1]The Book of Tobit 12:6b.

[2]Thomas Walker, Hebrew Religion between the Testaments (London: James Clarke, 1937) p. 22.

[3]R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913) I, 197.

in the third person directed to the reader, while they are themselves obviously pointed toward God. They begin with the words: "O Lord, Father and Master of my life...." and they conclude: "And do not give me up to a shameless mind."[1] There can be no doubt, however, that the two sections which Kohler does include (36:1-17 and 51:1-12ff.) are prayers. Although these passages do not strictly adhere to the typical prayer-forms, the opening sentence suggests that the author is now directing his thoughts not to the reader, but to God: "Have mercy upon us, Lord God of all, and look upon us, and cast fear of you upon all the heathen."[2] It is a prayer which seeks God's mercy upon Israel, while asking God to raise His hand against the aliens. Rather in contrast to what one might expect from the lofty Sirach, God is asked to destroy the nation's enemies. In fact, He is requested to hear the prayer so that the heathen may know who it is that responds to Jewish petitions. Charles comments:

> In the present subsection the writer pleads with God, in the form of a prayer, that He will save His own, and strike fear into the nations in order that all may know that He is God alone (vv. 1-5); God is urged to assert Himself by gathering in the scattered nation and by compassionating Sion (vv. 6-17). There are some striking parallels between this prayer and parts of the synagogue liturgy, especially the Eighteen Blessings (Shĕmōnēh ʿEsrēh), some of the key-words of which seem to be echoed here.[3]

The third prayer makes up the whole of the final chapter of the book, and is one of thanksgiving and praise. Sirach recalls not only the various times that God has delivered him from sin and destruction, but also the response which has come to his previous petition for wisdom.

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[1]Ben Sirach 23:1a & 6b. [2]Ben Sirach 36:1.

[3]Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., I. 440 n.

For these blessings, the writer gives thanks. Without intermediaries or apologies, he prays directly to God in the first person singular ("I", "mine", and "me" appearing frequently), thanking Him for redemption from death, for "keeping back" his flesh from the Pit, for standing on his side against the enemy, for saving him from manifold sorrows, and for answering a prayer for salvation which he previously has uttered. Charles places this prayer in the appendix of Ben Sirach and seriously questions its integrity. If, then, of the three possible prayers, one is an "appendix," and another is crude and vengeful, it is a sad commentary on this otherwise great book.

Yet, we dare not ignore the references to, and instructions for, prayer which occur in numerous passages throughout Ben Sirach. No judgment of the book should be formed on the basis of the three above supplications alone. Concerning practical instructions for effective prayer, little is said in intertestamental writings other than Ben Sirach. But here there are several suggestions, both implicit and explicit, which are aimed at teaching men how to petition the Lord. Sirach says: (1) He who provides for his father will be heard on the day that he prays;[1] (2) One must not become discouraged over his supplications if they are not answered;[2] (3) The supplicant must not repeat himself when he prays;[3] (4) One should pray for recovery from illness, but he must also give the physician an opportunity to effect a cure of the disease.[4] In addition to some of these more or less "practical" instru ctions, Ben Sirach: (1) calls prayer a means of repenting and turning to God (17:24); (2) urges that when one forgives the wrongs done by a neighbor, his own prayer

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[1]Ben Sirach 3:5.

[2]Ben Sirach 7:9.

[3]Ben Sirach 7:14.

[4]Ben Sirach 38:9.

for forgiveness will be answered (28:2); (3) affirms that the Lord hears the prayer of the wronged (35:13). These concepts, closely resembling some of the injunctions of the Lord's Prayer, are exalted. Sirach attaches a vital connection between ethics and prayer. The supplication of the righteous man is heard, and if one forgives a neighbor, his own sins may be forgiven through prayer. Not only practical advice, but the ethical demands of effective praying, are presented. Further than that, however, is Sirach's presentation of a unique definition of prayer. Though lacking the form of an official definition, the passage, by equating prayer with the work of a craftsman, says much about prayer's nature. Speaking of the common man who does the world's labor, Sirach says, "Yet they support the fabric of the world, and their prayer is in the practice of their trade."[1] He asserts that the man without training or spiritual development may still pray. He can supplicate with the work of his hands; he can offer up his productions to God. It is not inconceivable that the author, rather than presenting what appears to be a modern concept of prayer, is instead merely asserting that the craftsman prays about his work, requesting that it be fruitful and satisfactory. But because the author subsequently (39:6) refers to the spoken prayers of the educated and wise, it is likely that he here means the unspoken prayers of the craftsman. Undoubtedly Sirach thus employs a form of poetic license, for prayer cannot be completely defined as "the work of a man's hands." Yet the twentieth century has sometimes taught that work is as efficacious as prayer, or that supplications need not be uttered,

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[1]Ben Sirach 38:34.

the work of man's hands being all the prayer that is necessary. It is therefore not to the actual prayers themselves but to the more casual exhortations and suggestions concerning prayer that one must turn to understand the full beauty and power of Ben Sirach's teachings regarding these human outpourings toward God. Three prayers there are, but numerous short injunctions, suggestions, and references round out the picture left incomplete by studying the prayers alone.

As might be expected from the nature of its contents, Enoch 1-36 (166-161 B. C.) leaves little room for normal prayer relationships between man and God. Most of this fragment of Enoch both refers to, and has its setting in, the supernatural realm, dealing not with history as it is but with apocalyptic scenes and events. The book nowhere contains a real prayer directed by a man to God, although there is one reference to such a supplication (8:34). No actual words are quoted, but it is suggested that, when the Watchers came to earth bringing sin, men cried to God for protection. "And as men perished, they cried, and their voices went up to heaven."[1] Here is the sole indication that the author believes in human prayers uttered to God. References to intercession, however, there are in abundance, but only one such prayer is given: i.e., that spoken by the archangels in behalf of the men who are calling for deliverance from the sins of the Watchers.[2] It is a transcendent prayer, filled with praise for God and with requests that He inform them--the angels--what action to take. The remainder of the plot stems from this intercession, for God gives detailed instructions to each of the archangels regarding the suppression of sin and misery on the earth. One

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[1] Enoch 8:34.

[2] Cf. Enoch 9:4-11.

of the themes of the book is that Enoch is asked by the fallen angels, led by Azazel, to intercede for them. His mission in their behalf fails miserably, however, for the sins of the angels are such that no prayer which they may utter themselves or which may be offered in their behalf by someone else, can be effective. Instead, Enoch is admonished in a vision to reprimand the Watchers. The author of this apocalypse certainly sees prayer as no magical device. But it is not warranted to assert that he has no faith in prayer whatsoever; it is safer to affirm that his purpose actually offers little occasion for including the petitions uttered by earthly men, for the setting of the book is in heaven, and the theme concerns the final days of history. Let us conclude, then, not that the absence of prayers proves the author to have been sceptical of their efficacy, but that the purpose of the writer was such as to make reference to them unnecessary.

In that section of Enoch which has been termed by Charles "The Dream Visions," i.e., Enoch 83-90, one prayer is quoted, while two other references to supplication appear. Forming in a short compass a philosophy of religion from the Jewish standpoint, this section is divided into two visions, "the former of which deals with the first world-judgment of the Deluge, and the latter with the entire history of the world till the final judgment."[1] The second--and by far the longer--vision (Enoch 85-90), with its peculiar symbolisms and metaphor's of the world's history, contains no lengthy quoted supplications and petitions, while the actual word

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[1]R. H. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1893), p. 222.

"prayer" does not occur. But this is not to say that the author has no faith in petitions offered to God. In numerous cases Israel is so oppressed by the enemy that one expects to find prayers for deliverance. In at least two of those instances (87:1 and 89:19) a desperate, powerful supplication is uttered. Nowhere are they called "prayers" and nowhere are the actual words which are spoken quoted; and yet, Enoch says that after the giants and bulls had begun to gore one another, "the earth began to cry aloud."[1] Furthermore, he continues: "Thereupon I saw the wolves and how they oppressed the sheep exceedingly with all their power; and the sheep cried aloud."[2] The Egyptians (wolves) have subjected the Israelites (sheep), and the latter have called out to God, who responds. Perhaps the use of animals as symbols for nations precludes the employment of "prayer" as a title for these outcries, but they most certainly are supplications. The first vision (Enoch 83 f.) contains one somewhat elaborate petition, in the form of a prayer by Enoch that God may not destroy all of the men upon earth, but that only the unrighteous will be subject to the divine wrath and destruction. This is in a certain sense a "transcendant" prayer, one which praises God profusely, affirming His acts as creator and sole sovereign of the universe, and in which Enoch, without engaging in the customary self-humiliation, asks God directly to fulfil his wishes.[3] Because Enoch suggests that he wrote out his prayer for posterity to read, we are confronted with a singular phenomenon. After he sees the vision, Enoch

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[1] Enoch 87:1.

[2] Enoch 89:19.

[3] Enoch 84:2-6.

arises and "prayed and implored, and wrote down (his) prayer for the generations of the world...."[1] Although such an assertion is most rare in intertestamental literature, and although the bulk of the prayers are represented as having been uttered by the hero of the story but not written down by him, Enoch boldly affirms that he put his words in writing so that subsequent generations of Jews might be edified. Scholarship is agreed that the Book of Enoch is a pseudepigraphal writing, however, and therefore the patriarch's words cannot be accepted at their face value. Enoch did not write this book which bears his name; so how could he have put the prayer in writing and have incorporated it in the composition? Obviously the true author is attempting to place authenticity and prestige behind the prayer--an excellent indication that he thinks prayer an important phenomenon and the petition of a patriarch to be of exceptional value as a guide to future generations. The author seeks to give to the words the ring of authenticity and of authority. Hence, in these Dream Visions, prayer is afforded a unique place. Although Enoch's act of imploring God is not central to the plot or purpose of the writer, the fact that there is an effort to undergird the prayer by asserting authenticity for it, forces us to the conclusion that only the apocalyptic nature of the writing prevents it from containing more supplications.

The Book of Judith, which chronologically follows these sections from Enoch (150 B.C.) is as devoted to prayer as is the Book of Tobit. The first seven chapters discuss the historical events which occur before the initial appearance of Judith, the heroine, and which form the setting for the tale. The only important prayer of this opening section is the

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[1]Enoch 83:10.

group supplication offered by all of Israel when it first realizes that Holofernes is approaching (4:8-15).

> And every man and woman of Israel who lived in Jerusalem, with their children, fell down before the temple and threw ashes on their heads and spread out their sackcloth before the Lord. And they covered the altar with sackcloth and cried earnestly in concert to the God of Israel praying that he would not permit their children to be plundered and their wives to be pillaged and the cities they had inherited to be destroyed, and the sanctuary to be profaned and reviled, to the delight of the heathen.[1]

Strictly a petition, there is little that is unusual in this supplication; the people are but seeking deliverance. Yet, since the populace prays in unison, it is a group prayer, a somewhat unique type of supplication for the intertestamental period. Twice more in this opening section of the book the Israelites cry out to God for protection from the enemy and deliverance from death (7:19, 29). But with the advent of Judith to the story, prayers become more numerous. Not only does she affirm that God will rescue Israel in his own good time if the people will pray (8:17), but she implores Him to wreak vengeance upon Holofernes (9:1-14). After she arrives at the camp of the latter, she goes each evening out to pray, and when she returns victoriously to Israel, she offers a supplication of thanksgiving. In fact, throughout the book prayers come at the climactic points. When the enemy approaches, Israel calls for help from God (4:9-15). Achior, the leader of Ammon, telling Holofernes that Israel is a nation with a God-centered history, shows how her cry to Him formed the climax of her efforts to escape from Egypt.[2] When this same Ammonite is brought to the Jews after having been driven from the Assyrian camp for his championing of the Israelites, he tells them of Holofernes' plans and Israel prays again.[3] When Assyria has seized the fountains and threatens Israel's water-

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[1]The Book of Judith 4:11f. [2]The Book of Judith 5:11.

[3]Cf. Book of Judith 6:21, "And they called on the God of Israel for help all that night."

supply, the latter calls to her Lord.[1] Judith utters her prayer for vengeance after she has promised to save Israel.[2] Having arrived safely in the Assyrian camp, Judith departs each evening to pray for guidance (11:17). As she makes ready to slay the drunken general, she prays silently ("said in her heart") asking for help to strike him down (13:4f.), and then almost immediately bursting out into a verbal petition saying "Give me strength, Lord, God of Israel, today!"[3] When she carries Holofernes' head back to Israel, the people break out with praises to God (13:17). Finally, the major part of Ch. 16 is devoted to an elaborate prayer of blessing and thanksgiving uttered by Judith in the presence of all the people. It is at the points of climax that these supplications invariably come. The plot revolves about them, indicating that the unknown author of this moving story has the highest regard for and trust in the efficacy of prayer.

I Esdras, as a writing practically contemporaneous with the Book of Judith (150 B.C.) presents a considerably different portrait. The work, opening with the account of Josiah's observance of the Passover (1:1-58), traces the history of Judah through the Exile (2:1-4:63), the rebuilding of the Temple (5:1-7:15), the return of Ezra to Jerusalem (Ch. 8), and his reading of the Law (Ch. 9). In the first three chapters--those which deal with Israel's Exilic history and which tell the tale of the three young men who contest with one another to name what thing in the world is the mightiest--there are no prayers. But when Zerubbabel is appointed the winner with his answer that women and truth are the mightiest, he offers a short supplication of praise and thanksgiving,[4] for the king has per-

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[1]The Book of Judith 7:19.

[2]The Book of Judith 9:1-14.

[3]The Book of Judith 13:7.

[4]I Esdras 4:59f.

mitted him to lead Israel back to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple. Upon the return to the Holy City, the people engage in a series of ritualistic observances, which in some ways resemble supplications. They offer hymns of praise and thanksgiving, but these songs are more formal and legalistic than are the spontaneous prayers common to the literature which we have been observing. Actually, therefore, no prayer is uttered at the time of this jubilation.[1] Further, when the Temple is dedicated (Chs. 6 & 7) numerous rites are observed, but no prayers offered. After the migration of Ezra to Palestine, however, the supplications become more frequent. He not only prays for protection as he leaves Babylon (8:53), but offers intercession for Israel's sin at having married foreigners (8:75-90). The final chapter contains no supplications of any sort. In evaluating the contributions which I Esdras makes to our study, several facts need be considered: (1) I Esdras follows the accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah so slavishly that all its references to prayer are either suggested by, or copied from, these canonical books. I Esdras thus contributes little to our knowledge of intertestamental prayer. Rarely can one determine whether its supplications arise from the intertestamental period directly or are borrowed from the earlier writings. (2) I Esdras exhibits more interest in ritual and sacrifice than in prayer. (3) Extensive lists of names are given in this legalistic book to identify those who have migrated from Babylon back to Israel; reminding us much of the style of the Old Testament Priestly ("P") author; and suggesting that the prayers which appear in I Esdras more closely resemble those of the Old Testament than of the intertestamental era. (4) The book is valuable chiefly because

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[1] I Esdras 5:59-65.

of its omissions. One is surprised to observe that when Zerubbabel and, later, Ezra arrive safely from their journey they offer no prayers. A more appropriate time for thanksgiving could not be imagined. Yet they do not pray. Further, at the end of the book, just after the reading of the Law, prayers certainly are in order. But instead a festival and celebration are held. The populace is admonished at this time:

> This day is sacred to the Lord ... so go and eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to those who have none, for the day is sacred to the Lord. Do not mourn, for the Lord will honor you.[1]

Although I Esdras has its values, its exposition of prayer life is not of such transcendent worth as is that of the Books of Tobit or Judith.

The Song of the Three Holy Children, one of the short and fragmentary writings of our period, portrays a more liturgical type of supplication. Actually the Song is a Greek insertion in the text of the Book of Daniel, coming after Daniel 3:23. "The title given is inexact: under it are included two distinct pieces, namely, (1) the Prayer of Azarias, and (2) the Song or Hymn of the Three Holy Children."[2] Each of the sections is preceded by a short prose introduction which describes the setting of the hymn, the Prayer of Azarias supposedly being uttered as the three walk about in the midst of the fire, and the Hymn being sung by the three in unison as they are ultimately delivered from death. The date of the prayer is suggested by the words of verse 14 (Theodotion translation) where it is asserted "that at that time there was no prophet, leader, or sacrifice--perhaps between 168-165 B. C."[3] Likewise, the references to

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[1] I Esdras 9:50-52.

[2] Crawford Howell Toy, "Song of the Three Holy Children," The Jewish Encyclopedia, XI., 467.

[3] Ibid.

priests and Temple servants in verses 61f. (Theodotion) of the Hymn point to a period after the purification of the Temple, i.e., about 164 B. C. Therefore the Prayer of Azarias was apparently composed a few months before the Song of the Three Children. Even though these prayers are largely liturgical in form, they have considerable significance for our study, not because they cast new light upon the nature of hymns of praise, but because they are completely out of place in their present context. The supplication offered by Azarias on behalf of himself and his companions is more appropriately a national petition which (1) acknowledges past sins, (2) professes present obedience, and (3) pleads for mercy. On the other hand, the Hymn "is a doxology calling on all God's creatures to praise Him; and its expressions are taken from the canonical Psalter (see especially Ps. cxlviii)."[1] The editors who composed these two additions (two dates imply two or more authors) must therefore have desired not only to expand the story but to attribute the miraculous escape of the three Hebrews to the power of prayer. They must have felt profound faith in the efficacy of petition to God by the righteous, and, observing that the original Daniel does not sufficiently emphasize that fact, must have inserted these elaborate prayers to substantiate their belief. It was prayer that saved the three heroes; such is the message of these two writings. Yet because the editors insert a prayer and a hymn that are not at all appropriate, one may conclude that, rather than composing something original, they incorporated traditional national songs and supplications. There is little that is unique in the style and form

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[1] Ibid.

of the Prayer of Azarias. The invocation recognizes the glory and righteousness of God. Then the prayer continues with the customary confession of sins, asks God to remember the covenant with Abraham, describes Israel's present fearful plight, and concludes with a request for mercy and protection. Although not appropriate to the situation, and longer than the majority of those which we have thus far examined, the prayer is rather commonplace. But not so the Song of the Three Children! This Hymn possesses certain striking liturgical elements. It is characterized by numerous repetitions of the same phrases, verse after verse, and contains few of the accepted prayer forms. Instead, it is exclusively a doxology, concerned with praising, glorifying, and blessing the Lord.[1] There is no invocation, confession of sin, or petition. Instead, all creation is called upon to bless God. The significance, then, of the two writings which constitute the traditional "Song of the Three Children" is: (1) they introduce us to a more liturgical style of prayer-life, (2) they present evidence that the writers believed so firmly in the power of prayer that when they considered the original Dniel to be faulty in not mentioning the petitions of the heroes, they willingly appended some supplications, and (3) they suggest that prayers and hymns at this relatively early date might be long and elaborate.

The prayers lack much of the spontaneity observable in the beautiful petitions of Tobit or Judith, and they tend to be verbous. Note the redundancy of the following verse:

> We have sinned grievously in everything, and have disobeyed
> your commands;
> We have not observed them or done
> As you commanded us to do, for our own good.[2]

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[1] Cf. Song of the Three Children vs. 27.

[2] Cf. Song of the Three Children vs. 6.

Yet when compared with I Esdras, the prayer and hymn are enlightening. It has been suggested that I Esdras copies the canonical Ezra and Nehemiah so closely that it adds no prayers to the original text. In fact, there are numerous places where we expect to discover prayers, but do not find them. How different are the Prayer of Azarias and the Hymn of the Three Children! These two are definite attempts to add prayers to a text which had originally omitted any reference to them.

The Prayer of Manasseh (150-50 B.C.) is another short writing which is perhaps a Midrashic account of a petition offered by this wicked king in II Chonicles 33:12 f. It is a beautiful supplication of penitence, Pharisaic in color, and later associated with the prayer which King Manasseh offered when in distress. Poetical in its form, it is the only one of the writings under observation that is exclusively a prayer, containing no prose narrative material whatsoever. There is a ring of earnestness about the petition which forces us to the conclusion that its author was sincerely penitent. It is a sterling example of the loftiest type of soul out-pouring toward God. Furthermore, the typical prayer forms are carefully observed throughout. In fact, many of the standards by which the beauty and balance of prayers have been traditionally judged arise from this masterpiece. Ryle has actually summarized the contents, outlining them as follows:

> (1) The invocation: (a) O God of Israel (ver. 1), Lord and Creator of the Universe (vv. 2,3), infinite in power (ver. 4) and in anger against the sinner (ver. 5); (b) infinite also in mercy (ver. 6), Thou hast proclaimed forgiveness for repentance, and appointed me the sinner unto repentance (vv. 7,8).
> (2) The Confession: my sins are innumerable: I am unworthy to look upwards: I am justly punished, loaded with chains, in misery

(vv. 9-11).

(3) The Entreaty: I beseech Thee (ver. 11); I acknowledge all (ver. 12); grant pardon; consume me not; nor let Thine anger burn for ever (ver. 13).

(4) The Ascription: Thou, the God of them that repent, wilt graciously save me (ver. 14); and I will praise Thee for ever.

(5) The Doxology: Angels hymn Thy praises; Thine is the glory for ever (ver. 15).[1]

Here are all of the elements of a prayer in well-balanced form, and appearing perhaps as early as 150 B.C. Nearly all of the prayer-forms occuring in other intertestamental supplications are incorporated in this one to a greater or less extent. It is not a prayer for vengeance, military victory, or Wisdom; it is a penitent petition for forgiveness of sins.

The Book of Jubilees (135-100 B.C.), the first commentary upon the canonical Genesis and Exodus, is the re-editing from the Pharisaic standpoint of the history of events from the creation to the re-publication of the Law on Sinai. The Book of Jubilees contains several prayers, four of which are three or more verses in length: Moses' short intercession for Israel (1:19ff.); Noah's petition for the deliverance of his sons from evil spirits (10:3-6); Abraham's supplication for guidance at the time of his departure from Haran (12:19f.); and Abraham's prayer of his dotage, when, as an old man, he thanks God for long life (22:7ff). Further, in a short prayer, Rebecca raises her face to heaven and blesses God for giving her a pure son, Jacob (25:12f). Although no other actual prayers are recorded, several enlightening references to such supplications

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[1]Ryle, "The Prayer of Manasses," Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, ed. Charles, op. cit., I., 618.

occur. Young Abram, having not yet migrated from Ur, observes the sinfulness of the people: "And he began to pray to the Creator of all things that He might save him from the errors of the children of men, and that his portion should not fall into error after uncleanness and vileness."[1] Although in many essentials the Hebrew idea of sin differs from the Christian, the author of Jubilees understands that a man may implore God's protection against wickedness. After the Lord has brought Abram up out of Ur, leading him to the mountain, the young man praises Him for His goodness.[2] Besides, having praised God in 22:27, Abraham blesses his grandson Jacob in words which surely more closely resemble a prayer than a blessing; it is as though Abraham, through supplication, were invoking God's protection upon Jacob. Having begun the blessing with phraseology which might well mark the beginning of a prayer, Abraham closes with a passage which is decidedly supplicatory: "And bless him with all Thy blessings from henceforth unto all the days of eternity, and renew Thy covenant and Thy grace with him and his seed according to all Thy good pleasure unto all generations of the earth."[3] Years later, on the day that Jacob escapes from Laban's servitude, he blesses "the God of Isaac his father, and the God of Abraham his father's father."[4] Then, at Bethel, remembering the prayer with which he was once blessed, Jacob praises the God of his fathers.[5] Likewise, after his transgression with Tamar, Judah seeks divine forgiveness.[6] Finally,

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[1]The Book of Jubilees 11:17.

[2]Cf. The Book of Jubilees 13:7f.

[3]The Book of Jubilees 22:30.

[4]The Book of Jubilees 29:4.

[5]The Book of Jubilees 31:31.

[6]The Book of Jubilees 41:23.

Jubilees 45:4 hints that the Israelites offered "grace" at the table in conjunction with their meals. When Jacob becomes reunited with his sons in Egypt, he rejoices at beholding them all eating together, "and he blessed the Creator of all things who had preserved him, and had preserved for him his twelve sons."[1] Perhaps only under exceptional circumstances would the Jews have offered such a prayer, ordinarily neglecting to do so. Further, the prayer apparently has little connection with the food that is being eaten. Hence, only loosely can the thanksgiving be called "grace at the table." But this supplication, along with the others which we have observed, suggests that prayer was a vital reality to the author.

If the Book of Jubilees, which is essentially a commentary upon Genesis and parts of Exodus, can be shown to have altered the original accounts, that fact will be a significant indication of the religious changes which come to a people through the centuries. In order to observe such developments in prayer-life, one should compare the number of supplications in Genesis and Exodus with those in the Book of Jubilees. Immediately such a comparison reveals that several additions occur in the Midrash which are absent from the original. Most notable is the intercession of Noah for his sons. Although the supplication is contained in a Noah-fragment and is perhaps not part of the original Book of Jubilees, the canonical Genesis gives no evidence that the patriarch ever offered such a prayer. There is, likewise, no indication in the Old Testament that Abraham prayed for guidance when he began his migration from Ur of the Chaldees. The Book of Jubilees, nevertheless, records such a petition. Finally, Genesis is wholly silent concerning Abraham's prayer of thanksgiving, offered, according to the Book of Jubilees, just before his death. But this latter book also

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[1]The Book of Jubilees 45:5.

omits at least one supplication which occurs in Genesis, i.e., that of Isaac for sons.[1] These observations suggest that: (1) Although the Book of Jubilees contains a number of prayers, all of them are relatively short; (2) The author, believing firmly in the efficacy of petitions, inserts them in his account of the original Genesis, portraying the patriarchs as men of prayer; (3) Prayers of praise and intercession are more numerous in the Book of Jubilees than are those of strict petition.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (109-107 B. C.), closely related both in its date of composition and in its essential character to the Book of Jubilees, is pre-eminent in the intertestamental period for its teachings about prayer. In keeping with its exalted ethical standards, the Testaments contains a peculiarly lofty doctrine of the function and value of prayer. In eight of the twelve sections of the book, references to some form of intercession, petition, or thanksgiving are given. The Testaments of Gad and Joseph, however, present the noblest concepts. Nevertheless, there is but one prayer in the entire book, that is, only one where the words are actually quoted.[2] Other short allusions to supplications are made, along with concrete suggestions about methods of petitioning God, but these references do not record the words of the prayers. Further, this petition, consisting of but a single verse, is extremely concise. Having affirmed the exemption of the godly from control by the power of the wicked, Joseph utters a simple plea: "The God of my fathers and the angel of Abraham, be with me."[3] If this single entreaty were the sole source from which to obtain information, our knowledge of prayer in the Testaments would be meager. But fortunately, there are other passages which allude to prayers, and although the supplications themselves are not included, much may be gleaned from them.

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[1] Genesis 25:21-26.

[2] Testament of Joseph 6:7.

[3] Testament of Joseph 6:7.

In the Testament of Reuben, Jacob twice offers intercessory prayer for Reuben; once when the latter is sorely afflicted with a plague (1:7), and again when he has sinned with Bilhah (4:4). In the former instance, Reuben was so desperately ill that if his father had not prayed for him, he would have died, while in the latter case Jacob prayed that God's anger over Reuben's sin with Bilhah might be removed. Here are examples of the supplications of a righteous man in behalf of another who is less-righteous than himself. In the Testament of Simeon there are no allusions to intercession; but two unique suggestions about prayer are made. Simeon, when he has gathered his family all about him, tells them that he has received his name from the fact that his mother prayed that he might be born. He says: "And my mother Leah called me Simeon because the Lord had heard her prayer."[1] Although this is a play on the word "Simeon," it indicates not only that the mother had prayed for the child, but that she recognized his birth as the answer to the petition. Indeed, she must have possessed great faith in the power of prayer. Moreover, because Simeon had hated Joseph so terribly that he wished to kill him, God had withered his hand. Immediately he believed that the tragedy had come upon him because of his feeling toward Joseph; hence he besought the Lord to restore the stricken member.[2] Although the Testament does not assert directly that the prayer was answered, it is disclosed that the hand was withered for seven days, which allows us to conclude that at the termination of that period, it was healed. Here it is not the righteous patriarch interceding for a sinner, but the sinful Simeon praying in his own behalf. The issue of his prayer is almost identical to

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[1]The Testament of Simeon 2:2. [2]The Testament of Simeon 2:13.

that of Jacob's prayer which restores Reuben, but the method of achieving the result is quite different. Simeon's is a petition, in the narrow sense of the word, while Jacob's is an intercession.

Likewise, the family of Levi, gathered about the patriarch, is told that, when he had seen all about him the sins of men, he prayed for salvation and deliverance from similar wickedness.[1] He was grieved over the transgressions of mankind and believed that he might himself be saved through prayer. Because this passage asserts only that Levi prayed in order to be saved, and does not state from "what" he wished to be delivered, it may be only inferred that he sought salvation from wickedness. But a subsequent section phrased in the following manner, further clarifies the matter:

> Therefore the Most High hath heard thy prayer
> To separate thee from iniquity, and that thou shouldest
> become to Him a son,
> And a servant, and a minister of His presence.[2]

There can be no doubt that Levi here prays for salvation from iniquity and that God responds to the plea. Elsewhere the author of the Testament of Levi suggests the primitive belief that one must know the proper name of a divine being before one can call upon it in prayer. In typical apocalyptic style an angel had escorted Levi about, and the patriarch asked its name. "I pray Thee, O Lord," he said, "tell me Thy name, that I may call upon Thee in a day of tribulation."[3] Although the difficulties involved in praying to some unknown Power do not completely negate the possibilities of one's petitioning a nameless god, the author of the Testaments considers it essential to know the title of the God toward whom

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[1]The Testament of Levi 2:4. [2]The Testament of Levi 4:2.

[3]The Testament of Levi 5:5.

any supplications are addressed. So the Testament of Levi makes two contributions to our knowledge of Jewish prayer: (1) petitions for salvation from wickedness may be uttered and answered, and (2) the name of the God must be known before one can pray to it. The peculiar phenomenon of one man repenting while another intercedes for him occurs in the Testament of Judah. The only reference to prayer in the entire Testament suggests that Jacob had prayed for Judah because the latter's love for money had virtually ruined his life.[1] Three causes for God's leniency toward the erring son then follow: first, that Judah had repented; second, that the father had prayed; third, that God realized Judah's ignorance. Thus while the prayer of Jacob was deemed efficacious, Levi thought his own repentance to be similarly effective. To accept such teachings is to uphold the anomalous contention that one man's repentance and another's prayers may produce results. Whereas the author of the Testaments undoubtedly accepts the traditional view that the man who prays must himself repent, he also suggests that in intercessory prayer the one for whom intercession is being offered ought to feel contrition.

The initial chapter of the Testament of Naphtali suggests that Joseph and his brother Naphtali were like one another because Rachel had besought God to make it so, and therefore it implies that Leah's prayer for the yet unborn Simeon had its counterpart in her sister's entreaty concerning Naphtali.[2] Moreover, when the latter grew to manhood, he came to have great faith in supplications, even dreaming one night of Levi's intercession in behalf of the twelve brothers. According to the dream, a great storm had arisen, and a boat in which the twelve were sailing was sorely threatened.

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[1]The Testament of Judah 19:2. [2]The Testament of Naphtali 1:8.

Therefore, Levi, girded about with sackcloth, prayed to the Lord in behalf of them all.[1] Obviously, concealed within this literary device, lies the belief of the author, whose suggestion that the priestly Levi acted as intercessor is somewhat unique for the intertestamental period. Although even in the thinking of the Testaments, Jacob is the supreme intercessor, Levi must have ranked similarly. Finally, and without further comments, the passage which suggests that a man must be in a proper mood before praying and ought not to allow incongruous elements into his mind while so engaged, may be quoted:

> For there is a season for a man to embrace his wife,
> And a season to abstain therefrom for his prayer.[2]

Not only should a man set aside such a "season," but he should reserve it for prayer alone.

Although Jacob's intercessory prayer for the recovery of Gad from a serious liver disease is in no way uncommon,[3] one lovely and unique idea is expressed in the Testament of Gad: i.e., that one should pray for the man who prospers more than he himself. The patriarch says: "If a man prospereth more than you, do not be vexed, but pray also for him, that he may have perfect prosperity."[4] Even within Christianity there is no more elevated doctrine of prayer than this. Supplication becomes a protection against covetousness. But when this passage is amplified by one in the Testament of Joseph which instructs the supplicant to pray for his enemies,[5] it is apparent that the author of the Testaments sees a vital connection between ethics and prayer.

The Testament of Joseph, however, presents the most valid and consistent teaching concerning the petition as reinforcement against temptation. Having

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[1]Testament of Naphtali 6:8.
[2]Testament of Naphtali 8:8.
[3]Testament of Gad 5:9.
[4]Testament of Gad 7:1.
[5]Testament of Joseph 18:2.

called his family about him, the patriarch speaks of the Egyptian woman's efforts to involve him in sin with her. At first Joseph prays in his chamber, apparently asking for protection against her wiles.[1] Later the burden of his petition is made clear. He seeks deliverance from her. Persistent as she is in her machinations, Joseph is equally vigilant in his resistance. Five times he prays fervently to God for help against her bold approaches (Cf. 3:3, 4:8, 6:7, 7:4, 8:1), while in the final instance he kneels all day and all night in supplication. As a result of his vigil, Joseph, although being falsely thrown into jail, retains his innocence. No more excellent description of prayer's effectiveness against temptation has been written. The author attributes the success of the patriarch's struggle to two things which run hand in hand, the prayers and the fasting. In nearly all of the references listed above, fasts accompanied Joseph's petitions. In vigorous terms the patriarch expresses his faith in the efficacy of these elements of the religious life: "Ye see, therefore, my children," he urges, "how great things patience worketh, and prayer with fasting."[2] Joseph believes the combination of prayer and fasting to be an efficient approach to God and an adequate protection against even the greatest of temptations.

The Testament of Benjamin presents little that is unique, merely referring to prayers for childbirth,[3] intercession by Jacob,[4] and Benjamin's startling assertion that, through Jacob's prayers, he had himself vividly and distinctly beheld Joseph, who was dwelling in Egypt--seen him exactly as he was.[5] In a sense, therefore, the Testament of Benjamin, the last of the twelve sections purportedly written by the patriarchs, serves as a sum-

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[1] The Testament of Joseph 3:3.

[2] The Testament of Joseph 10:1.

[3] The Testament of Benjamin 1:4.

[4] The Testament of Benjamin 3:6.

[5] The Testament of Benjamin 10:1.

mary to this discussion. Although there is but one actual prayer in the book, the allusions to various types of supplication are numerous and varied. The book's rich ethical content carries over into its prayer-life. Although there are some exceptions, the prayers are, for the most part, either (1) the intercessions of righteous men for sinners, (2) the requests of those who seek righteouness for protection against the wiles of sin and temptation. Furthermore, one is struck by the number of unique elements which the Testaments contain: (1) it is unusual to discover a recommendation for the employment of prayer as a protection against enmity and envy; (2) The persistent suggestion that diseases may be healed and sins forgiven by intercession is uncommon. Finally (3) the Testament of Joseph is outstanding among the writings of the period for its affirmations that prayer and fasting may be employed effectively as protection against temptation and vice.

Enoch 91-104, an autonomous writing of which the Apocalypse of Weeks forms the heart, is an effort to answer the all-consuming question of the age, namely, why the righteous man must suffer and be frequently subject to the wicked. This section, written by a Pharisee sometime before 95 B. C., presents a mature answer to that problem. Although the wicked men are seemingly sinning with impunity, their evil deeds are recorded every day, and for these they will receive endless retribution in Sheol. But a day is approaching when these wicked will be punished even on this earth and the righteous will triumph. From the eighth to the tenth world-week the Messianic kingdom in which the righteous are to be victorious will endure. Then will ensue the final judgment, the destruction of the old heaven and earth, the creation of a new heaven, the spiritual resurrection of the righteous dead, and the beginning of everlasting existence for the holy

children of God.[1] In such a book it is not particularly startling to find a total absence of prayers. Although there are scattered references to the petitions of the righteous and the intercession of the angels, no prayers of any kind are actually incorporated in the text. In 97:3 and 5 it is implied that the supplications of the righteous will be efficacious in bringing speedily the day of judgment upon the sinners: "What will ye do, ye sinners, and whither will ye flee on that day of judgment when ye hear the voice of the prayer of the righteous?" Furthermore, the following taunt appears: "In those days the prayer of the righteous will reach unto the Lord, and the days of your judgment will overtake you."[2] The potent supplications of the just man, offered on the day of the great assize, will put to shame the sinful. At 99:3, moreover, the righteous are instructed to offer their prayers on this great day so that the sinful may be adequately judged: "And in those days make ready, ye righteous, to raise your prayers as a memorial, and ye will place them as a testimony before the angels in order that they may place the sin of the sinners for a memorial before the Most High." This is, indeed, one suggestion that the righteous have been offering up prayers for revenge and that they are now to be answered. Inasmuch as the author of Enoch 91-104 asserts that the sinful will be confounded as a result of these prayers, several conclusions may be drawn: (1) the supplication of the righteous man has immense power; (2) the righteous petition for vengeance, whether or not it is heard the moment uttered, will be effective on that final day, for then such prayers will "reach unto the Lord;"[3] (3) the supplication of the just man actually facilitates the process of judgment by becoming a testimony before the angels "in order that they

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[1]Cf. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1893) p. 265.

[2]Enoch 97:5.

[3]Enoch 97:5.

may place the sin of the sinners for a memorial before the Most High."[1] Further, both 99:3 and 104:1 suggest that the angels operate as intercessors for men. When the righteous offer prayers, the angels hear and respond by presenting the petition before the Lord. Therefore, although this section of Enoch gives no example of these prayers, either of the righteous or the intercessors, it leaves some room for supplication. There are no prayers of thanksgiving, praise, or repentance here. All are references to petitions for vengeance. Also, there is an absence of that type of prayer so common to other apocalypses, i.e., prayers for insight or Wisdom. Frequently, because there is some vision to be interpreted, a prayer for understanding is found. But there is no true vision in Enoch 91-104 and hence no such petition. Otherwise, there are approximately as many prayers in this book as we have come to expect in other apocalyptic writings.

In the charming tale of Bel and the Dragon, another of the additions to the canonical Book of Daniel, there are again no real prayers. Nowhere in this fragment, written about 100 B. C. does the word "prayer" actually appear, although in verses 38 and 41 there are short ejaculations addressed to God which mightconceivably be termed supplications. When the prophet Habakkuk miraculously brings food to Daniel in the prison , the latter says: "You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you."[2] Later, when Cyrus approaches and sees Daniel still alive in the den, he shouts loudly: "You are great, Lord God of Daniel, and there is no other beside you!"[3] In the one instance the words are shouted; in the other they are merely an affirmation. Although throughout this paper a broad definition of the word "prayer" has been employed,

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[1] Enoch 99:3.

[2] Bel and the Dragon 37.

[3] Bel and the Dragon 41.

it is for several reasons difficult to classify these outbursts as "prayers:" (1) both are affirmations of God's greatness and trustworthiness more than they are requests or aspirations directed toward Him; (2) the word "prayer" is not employed; (3) the purpose of the book is chiefly to ridicule idolatry, and any reference to prayer would be only casual or at the most subordinate to the essential theme. But whether or not these remarks be called "prayers," there is a striking contrast between the story of Bel and the Dragon and that other addition to Daniel, the Song of the Three Children. The latter is essentially a prayer, any narrative material being almost wholly introductory and explicative. But the former is a prose attack upon idolatry, and any prayers which it might contain must be largely extraneous. To remove them is in no way to alter the plot. Indeed, the story of Daniel's conquest of Bel and the Dragon must be classified as one of that extremely small number of intertestamental compositions which has little or no concern for prayer.

Another writing which should be listed under the same category is the Book of Celestial Physics, found in Enoch 72-82. While the fragment can probably not be dated, it shall at this point be inserted into the discussion because it too leaves no room for prayer. No reference to supplication of any kind appears, while the word "prayer" is nowhere to be observed. In the opening sections of the book, which describe exclusively the workings of nature, it is not surprising to discover no supplications.[1] But in the later portion, beginning with Ch. 80, a more ethical interest appears. Although prayers might be more logically expected in this section than in the preceding one, none appear. Not only is

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[1]Cf. Enoch 72-79.

this the sole fragment of Enoch to omit all prayers, but it shares with only a few other writings this phenomenal omission.

Of all intertestamental literature, I Maccabees (90-70 B. C.) casts some of the most interesting light upon Jewish prayer-life. It is, indeed, astounding to discover imbedded in the accurate historical accounts of this composition a large number of prayers. Although no literature could be produced by Israel without bearing some stamp of her great religious conscience, I Maccabees, because of its astonishing accuracy of detail and deep concern for national and international affairs is not strictly a religious history. The initial section of the book (Ch. 1) closely resembles any modern history and is free from supernaturalism or undue concern over religious matters. Indeed, it might well be called a "secular" digest of Israel's history. It is thus illuminating to observe the number of prayers which the book contains: i.e., 3:44: 4:30-33; 5:33; 7:37f.; 7:41f.; 11:72; 12:11. In addition to these direct supplications or references to them, there are numerous suggestions that the Maccabees "called upon the Lord." But underlying the whole of the book is a positive philosophy of history which makes the appearance of prayers in the account a normal consequence. Judas, when speaking to his faint-hearted soldiers and followers, says:

> It is easy for many to be inclosed in the hands of a few, and there is no difference in the sight of heaven between saving through many or through few, for victory in war does not depend upon the size of the force, but strength comes from heaven....He himself will crush them before us, and you must not be afraid of them.[1]

Hence, most of the victories were attributed to the hand of God working, not miraculously, but normally through the lives of warriors, affording them

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[1] I Maccabees 3:18-22.

increased strength and fervor. Because the Maccabees possess such a philosophy, prayers for victory are in no sense incongruous. Nevertheless, it is curious that frequently the Maccabees pray fervently when sorely pressed by the enemy, while at other times under similar circumstances they offer no supplications whatsoever. At least four times Judas asks God for protection against the adversary: (1) when the crisis caused by the approach of Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias becomes serious (3:44); (2) when Lysias prepares to attack (4:30-33); (3) when Judas and Jonathan meet the armies of Timotheus (5:33); and (4) when Nicanor threatens to destroy the Temple unless Judas is delivered over to him (7:41 f.). In the face of other equally serious trials, however, Judas refrains from such supplication. When he assembles the people to discuss the reports concerning the oppression of Jews by the people of Gilead and Galilee, he faces a severe crisis. Yet he offers no prayer.[1] Further, he does not ask God for victory when he meets the king's army and elephants at Beth-zechariah.[2] Numerous other instances in which Judas or others of the Maccabees fail to pray suggest some conclusions. The assertion that Judas offered these supplications is either historically accurate or based upon well-known traditions. The author of I Maccabees obviously is following no preconceived theory about Judas' prayer-life, otherwise there would be more regularity, more "reason" in his supplications. Before some battles he prays; before others he does not. Since the accuracy of I Maccabees is not to be challenged in most other instances, it should not be in this. Hence, if Judas was not himself a man of prayer, he left such an impression upon his followers that they believed him to have been. None of these recorded prayers is more than

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[1] I Maccabees 5:9-19.

[2] I Maccabees 6:32-47.

four verses in length, that at 4:30-33 being the most elaborate and beautiful. Further, of the seven passages which refer to supplications, only three actually preserve the wording of the prayer (4:30-33; 7:37f.; 7:41f.), while the others merely assert that a prayer was offered, neither the phraseology nor much illumination concerning the contents being given. No study of the prayer-life of any people is complete without observing their recorded history, but when prayers are interspersed throughout this history, even more priceless information may be obtained. I Maccabees, although containing chiefly prayers of petition and intercession (i.e., Judas praying for his army), sheds light upon the problems of: (1) the efficacy of prayer, (2) the nature of the divine response to petitions for victory, (3) the relation between the effectiveness and the length of prayers, and (4) the employment of supplications particularly during times of distress. The author of I Maccabees has profound faith in the outcome of prayers for victory, but believes them to be answered with a minimum of supernaturalism. Because the prayers in the book are all short and all reach a satisfactory issue, it is evident that the author believes the length of the petitions to matter little. Lastly, although this is not universally true, most of the petitions, whether offered by Judas, Jonathan, or Simon, are uttered in times of deep despair and crisis.

Manifestly different from the historical books of the Maccabees, is Enoch 37-71, commonly called the Similitudes (70-64 B. C.). In conformity with the other sections of Enoch, these chapters deal chiefly with the apocalyptic approach to history, while prayer is only a subordinate interest. What the Similitudes do have to say about supplications, however, is uniquely interesting. They are concerned with (1) the supplications

of the righteous, and (2) intercessory prayer. It is immediately apparent that the Similitudes believe the prayers of the righteous to be heard invariably, an idea which is re-enforced by the assertion that all of the prayers of the wicked, even requests for forgiveness, will be forgotten by God, going unheard. The evil ones are punished, and their prayers are ignored. The supplications of the righteous will ascend to the Lord of Spirits on the day of the great assize,[1] and they will be heard without fail.[2] Because of such promises the righteous should take heart. But the wicked shall repent in vain. The Kings and the mighty will petition the Lord of Spirits for mercy, only to discover that He does not heed their plea.[3] The single prayer in the Similitudes whose words are given in full is the entreaty of these mighty ones for mercy. But in spite of their prayer, they are driven from His presence. Of the righteous it is said, however:

> And the hearts of the holy were filled with joy that the number of righteousness had drawn nigh, and the prayer of the righteous was heard, and the blood of the righteous required before the Lord of Spirits.[4]

Of equal import in the Similitudes are the intercessory prayers, both of angels and of the righteous dead. When Enoch is carried away to the end of the heavens by the whirlwind, he sees the dwelling-place of the righteous, "and they petitioned, and interceded and prayed for the children of men, and righteousness flowed before them as water, and mercy like dew upon the earth."[5] Those who have lived noble lives upon earth are authorized, after death, to offer intercessory prayers for living men. But the Archangels are the supreme intercessors. "And the third voice (Gabriel) I heard

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[1] Enoch 47:1.
[2] Enoch 47:4.
[3] Enoch 63:2-4.
[4] Enoch 47:2.
[5] Enoch 39:5.

pray and intercede for those who dwell on the earth and supplicate in the name of the Lord of Spirits."[1] Throughout the intertestamental period angels were commonly thought to exercise mediatory functions. These intercessions generally assumed one of two possible forms: (1) the angel might appear personally before God to relay the messages of earthly supplicants and to plead their cause; (2) the angel might offer some heavenly sacrifice to appease Him. Here in the Similitudes, however, is a third concept of mediation. The Archangel prays to God, in a manner similar to that of human supplicants. Although he is one of the four "Presences" who stands at the side of the Lord of Spirits, Gabriel himself prays instead of merely relaying some earthly request or offering a sacrifice. His activity is decidedly not the carrying of some human cause to the throne of God and there openly, in the character of an advocate, urging Him to hear it. The mediation, more distinctly here in the Similitudes than elsewhere, takes the form of intercessory prayer.

Equally unique is the suggestion in the Similitudes that the celestial bodies offer praise and thanks to the Lord of Spirits. Having observed the orderly progress of the stars across the heavens, Enoch says: "And they give thanks and praise and rest not; for to them their thanksgiving is rest."[2] Toward the end of the Similitudes, the patriarch expresses a similar thesis: all the natural phenomena of earth, air, and sea "believe and give thanks before the Lord of Spirits and glorify (Him) with all their power, and their food is nothing save thanksgiving: they thank and glorify and extol the name of the Lord of Spirits for ever and ever."[3] Regardless of the absence of the word "prayer" from the above passage, it is not illogical to interpret the author as suggesting that these natural

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[1] Enoch 40:6.

[2] Enoch 41:7b.

[3] Enoch 69:24.

phenomena pray. Obviously one must attach a loose definition to the word to list the praises of inanimate, non-speaking objects as "prayers." Yet if such objects are able to praise God, they can also pray to Him. Because praise and thanksgiving imply some form of hymn or prayer, the writer of the Similitudes, whether employing poetic license or apocalyptic imagery, asserts that even nature prays to God. It is somewhat unexpected, therefore, to observe the almost total absence of prayers in these Similitudes. Although there are numerous references to supplications, only one such is actually quoted: i.e., that of the wicked rulers for mercy, and it is not effective in gaining the desired end. God refuses to hear it. Yet because of its lucid portrayal of intercessory prayer, along with its suggestions concerning the petitions of the righteous, Enoch 37-71 marks a mile-stone in the prayer-life of the Jews.

A few words may suffice to describe the concepts of prayer in the Story of Susanna (100-50 B. C.), the first of the three Greek additions to Daniel. Only one supplication of any sort occurs in the fragment, but although it is short in length, it is a gem of concision and power. Susanna has been falsely accused by the corrupt justices and seems destined to be stoned. After the two men ahev testified, she utters a loud cry, saying:

> Eternal God, you who know what is hidden, who know all things before they happen, you know that what they have testified to against me is false, and here I am to die when I have done none of the things they have so wickedly charged me with.[1]

Not only is this a fervent petition, but it produces an immediate response from God. She is being led away to death when the Lord, having heard her cry, despatches Daniel to confound the testimony of the vicious judges. Therefore, although only one prayer appears, it constitutes the center of

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[1]The Story of Susanna 42f.

the plot; the advent of the hero is directly dependent upon the prayer, and the happy issue of the story rests upon it. The supplication, being uttered in desparation, is not the ordered product of careful thought but the fierce outpouring of the heart. As a result, Susanna cries aloud, appealing to God's infinite wisdom and asserting her innocence of the charges. The Lord hears her cry and wreaks vengeance and justice upon the wicked. Here, just as in Tobit and to a lesser extent in Judith, the happy outcome of the tale is dependent upon the supplication.

Of all the writings of this period, however, II Maccabees has the largest number of allusions to supplication, but in few instances are the actual words of the prayers given. Only in two passages (1:23-29 and 15:22-24), or perhaps in three (1:1-7), are the prayers more than mentioned. Although 1:1-7 may not be a true prayer, the other two assume the customary concepts and structures observable in the more complete entreaties, such as those seen in the Prayer of Manasseh. At the ceremony which attends the purification of the Temple by Nehemiah, according to II Maccabees, the priests utter a prayer while the sacrifice is being celebrated. Containing elements of praise, affirmation, and petition, the supplication calls for God to recieve the sacrifice, gather together the scattered people of Israel, and afflict the nation's enemies.[1] The prayer in its present form is relatively complete, suggesting a highly-developed prayer life. The other extensive petition is uttered by Judas when he is threatened by the forces of Nicanor.[2] Recognizing the effectiveness of God's intervention in Israel's behalf in the past, Judas petitions Him to act similarly once more, so that

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[1] II Maccabees 1:23-29.

[2] II Maccabees 15:22-24.

the enemy may be struck down. Although the passage is not as long as that of II Maccabees 1:23-29, these words of the Maccabean prince constitute an authentic prayer. The more doubtful section to which we referred above appears at the opening of the book where the term "prayer" is employed in a loose sense, becoming virtually synonymous with the English word "wish."[1] Having listed a number of the blessings which he hopes may come to the Jewish brethren in Egypt, the author says, "This is our prayer for you here."[2] The form rather than the content of the passage militates against its being called a prayer in the strict sense of the word. That is not to say that the Palestinian Jews had not been praying for their kinsfolk in Egypt, but it is to assert emphatically that the passage as given in the present writing is not strictly a prayer. Hence only two real supplications are recorded in II Maccabees. Nevertheless, nearly two-dozen times the word "prayer" or some equivalent expression occurs in the text. Numerous allusions are made to petitions uttered by Judas, the priests, or the people, but often no hint is given as to the length, content, phraseology, or structure of the supplication. But two other passages occupy controversial territory, being neither complete prayers nor mere allusions to some petition whose words have been omitted. One is the loud outburst of praise by Judas' men when Nicanor is defeated: "Blessed be he who has kept his own place from being defiled."[3] The other is the entreaty of the priests for the protection of the Sanctuary from destruction by Nicanor: "Lord of all, who are self-sufficient, you consented to have a temple for your habitation among us; now therefore, holy Lord of all consecration, keep undefiled

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[1] II Maccabees 1:1-7.

[2] II Maccabees 1:7.

[3] II Maccabees 15:34.

forever this house that has been so lately purified."[1] Though somewhat resembling true prayers, these passages represent incomplete, rather formless outpourings of the spirit. Whatever may be the classification of the five passages which have thus far been investigated (1:1-7; 1:23-29; 14:35f.; 15:22-24; 15:34), the numerous other sections which refer to petitions give little indication of their wording or structure.

Only against the background of the philosophy which underlies II Maccabees can the true meaning of the book's prayers be seen. The purpose of the author is to affirm that God is ultimately the victor, that Israel must place her trust not in military arms but in Him. Almost invariably after his victories, Judas recognizes that it is God's hand that has acted. The author expresses this conviction in emphatic terms: "the priests stretched out their hands to heaven and called him who always fights for our nation."[2]

> The successful emergence of Israel after every crisis was attributed not to the arm of flesh, but to the help which had come from God in response to prayer. After Judas organized his forces, and whoever the enemy might be,--whether Gorgias, or Lysias, or Nicanor,--he was confronted by people who had just prayed.[3]

In accordance with this faith Judas prays for help before nearly all of his major battles. In an effort to demonstrate his thesis, the author includes numerous references to supernatural phenomena. Whereas in I Maccabees petitions are answered in no extraordinary way, God frequently responds with divine miracles in II Maccabees. The tendency to include the miraculous in the narrative of history, therefore, is apparent in the prayers also. Numerous miraculous events occur, many in response to supplication. As a result of Moses' prayer, says II Maccabees referring

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[1] II Maccabees 14:35f.

[2] II Maccabees 14:34.

[3] Walker, op. cit., p. 20.

to a traditional story, fire descended from heaven to burn the sacrifice upon the altar.[1] Furthermore, during the writer's own day, the people, having seen mysterious manifestations in the heavens, pray that they may betoken good.[2] Upon the appearance of Timotheus and his army before the Jewish fortresses, Judas and his men pray for victory; then when the battle becomes fierce, five heavenly figures on horses lead the Jews, protect Judas, and hurl thunderbolts at the enemy.[3] Although in these passages the miraculous occureences are not strictly attributed to the fervent petitions, the author surely implies as much. Likewise, when Judas learns that Lysias is approaching, he beseeches the Lord to send some angel as a deliverer. In direct response to this prayer "a rider, clothed in white, appeared at their head, brandishing gold weapons."[4] Thus in II Maccabees, perhaps more than in any non-apocalyptic writing of the period --unless it be III Maccabees--supernatural phenomena are described.

In addition to belief in the miraculous and in God's direct intervention, II Maccabees implies: (1) that hymns of praise may accompany prayers (1:30; 10:7); (2) that prayers for the dead are customary; (3) that Jeremiah operates as a heavenly intercessor (15:13); and (4) that group prayers are frequent (Cf. 10:26; 11:6; 12:16; 12:28; 13:10; 15:34). While supplications of this last type are not uncommon outside II Maccabees, it is here that they are found in greatest abundance. Rarely does Judas invoke God alone; usually all of the people, or at least all of Judas' army, pray. Judas in one case specifically orders the people to unite in supplicating the Lord for a day and a night; in response, the populace petitions Him for three days without ceasing.[5] Common prayers engaged in by all the

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[1] II Maccabees 2:10.
[2] II Maccabees 5:4.
[3] II Maccabees 10:29-31.
[4] II Maccabees 11:8.
[5] II Maccabees 13:10-12.

people, miraculous phenomena, entreaties for victory--all are characteristics of prayer in II Maccabees.

The Wisdom of Solomon (50 B. C. to 10 A. D.) furnishes a further introduction to the religious life of the intertestamental era. Since the book is composite, exhibiting a sharp break in style and thought after 11:1, no consistent teachings concerning prayer may be expected; yet there can be no more exalted petition than that which includes the whole of Ch. 9. Pleading his own weakness and the greatness of his task, Solomon prays for the gift of wisdom, that it may be his bride to assist him. The supplication, opening with a glorious invocation and continuing with a curt petition, adheres to most of the accepted forms of style and structure, except that it offers no doxology as its conclusion, merely ending with the assertion that man is saved through wisdom. Although most prayers contain references and affirmations which have theological implications, Solomon's request for wisdom has an unusual number of statements which suggest the nature of the author's theology. In fact, if all sections of the Wisdom of Solomon should be lost except this prayer, it might still be possible to reconstruct the writer's essential beliefs, for the supplication contains varied references to and revelations of the theology which underlies the whole of the book. In the invocation Solomon affirms the nature of God, calling Him God of the fathers who created all things by His word or wisdom, and suggests that He has control over history. In that section of the prayer which is more strictly "petition," he not only requests wisdom, but suggests that she sits at the side of God.[1] Furthermore, as Solomon affirms his conviction of his own personal election to the kingship (9:7,8) and ascribes wisdom to God, he also outlines her

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[1]The Wisdom of Solomon 9:4.

nature (9:9). Finally, the last half of the prayer considers, along with petitions, the various functions of wisdom and her relations to the ignorance of men (9:10-18). The prayer, therefore, in addition to the normal structural elements observable in the majority of supplications, presents an outline of the author's theology. Manifestly it is impossible to pray without making certain affirmations and implying certain theological beliefs, but to fill a supplication with as many such statements as appear here is uncommon.

Besides this one extensive and lovely entreaty, at least four other references to some kind of supplication occur in the Wisdom of Solomon, but none of these record the words or the contents. Solomon insists that he was originally like other men but that understanding was given to him in answer to prayer.[1] He does not state whether or not the lengthy supplication of 9:1-18 is a reproduction of this original petition for understanding, but we may assume that it is. But more unique even than his prayer for wisdom is his polemic against petitions to idols. With blistering scorn he assails those who pray to the dead gods which they have built with their own hands.[2] In phraseology which resembles that of Deutero-Isaiah he says:

> But miserable were they, and in dead things were their hopes,
> Who called them gods which are the works of men's hands,
> Gold and silver, wrought with careful art, and likenesses of beasts,
> Of a useless stone, the work of an ancient hand.[3]

Then he continues with the words: "And when he maketh his prayer for his goods and for his marriage and children, he is not ashamed to speak to that which hath no life."[4] These attacks upon the folly of directing prayers to idols are most unique for the intertestamental period. In

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[1]The Wisdom of Solomon 7:7. [2]The Wisdom of Solomon 13:17.

[3]The Wisdom of Solomon 13:10. [4]The Wisdom of Solomon 13:17.

earlier days such polemics were frequently directed against idolatry, but in the Judaism of the first century before Christ such an attack is hardly to be expected. Yet so dauntless is the assault made by the author of the Wisdom of Solomon that he openly ridicules all supplications directed to man-made gods. The two other allusions to prayer are not as important as those previously mentioned. The one represents Israel as having prayed to be separated from the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus (18:2), while the other refers to Aaron's intercession on behalf of Israel during the plague (18:21). Thus the Wisdom of Solomon sheds light upon the prayer-life of the age. Supplications might be employed for curing a disease, obtaining wisdom, or calling to an idol. But any petitions of the third type were condemned as fruitless and invalid. Supplications could be effective, but they must be directed to the true God, the Creator of earth and the provider of wisdom.

Whereas supplications are important in the Wisdom of Solomon, they are even more central as one of the major themes in the Apocalypse of Baruch. Jeremiah's amenuensis, Baruch, is described as a man of prayer, being specifically informed that his supplications are as a strong wall to the city.[1] In keeping with his position as Jerusalem's intercessor, Baruch engages in three long prayers and a single short one (21:4-25; 38:1-4; 48:2-24; 54:2-22). But to avoid confusion, a distinction between two types of writing in the book must be made: (1) a number of dialogues, or conversations--nowhere entitled "prayers"--between God and Baruch; and (2) the four passages that are undeniably supplications. The former are informal

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 2:2.

communications between the Seer and God, containing several introductory phrases, such as "And I said...;"[1] "And the Lord said unto me...;"[2] "And I answered and said...."[3] Not only, therefore, are these passages composed in a conversational style, but they lack all of the traditional prayer forms, such as, an invocation, a confession of sin, and a doxology. In contrast with these dialogues, the true supplications exhibit careful adherence to prayer structures. The three longer passages are strikingly similar in style, content, length, and outcome. They average twenty-one verses in extent, being, therefore, considerably longer than most prayers of the intertestamental literature. Baruch first prays at length for the rapid advent of the Day of Judgment.[4] Then, having beheld a spectacular vision, he beseeches the Lord to interpret the phenomenon.[5] In a prayer which affirms the greatness of God and ascribes to Him the control of times, seasons, and mankind, the Seer bewails the temporality and mortality of men.[6] Finally, Baruch requests God to interpret a vision.[7] This is indeed chiefly a song of praise. In contradiction to the other prayers, which are heard by God and answered directly by Him, this final petition is fulfilled by an angel called Ramiel, the presider over true visions. Having originally appeared to the Seer in 55:3, the angel asserts specifically, in 56:1, that he has come in response to Baruch's petition. Ramiel says: "because thou hast besought the Most High to reveal to thee the interpretation of the vision which thou hast seen, I have been sent to thee."[8] Moreover, in each case the answer, which is either a direct revelation of God or the issuing of instructions, comes immediately. The prayers them-

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[1] Apocalypse of Baruch 3:1a.
[2] Apocalypse of Baruch 4:1a.
[3] Apocalypse of Baruch 5;1a.
[4] Apocalypse of Baruch 21:4-25.
[5] Apocalypse of Baruch 38:1-4.
[6] Apocalypse of Baruch 48:2-24.
[7] Apocalypse of Baruch 54:2-22.
[8] Apocalypse of Baruch 56:1.

selves are supremely beautiful noth in content and rhetoric, being expressed in simplicity and earnestness of heart.

Throughout the apocalypse appears a distinctive structure. Most of the longer supplications are preceded by some ritualistic act and followed by a divine revelation. "For the scheme of the final editor is first a fast, then generally a prayer, then a divine message or revelation, then an announcement of this either to an individual...or to the people ...followed occasionally by lamentation."[1] Therefore, not only may a predictable structure be found, but, because the passgaes referring to fasts, visions, or lamentations are extremely brief, most of the book takes the form of direct communication between Baruch and God, either through prayer or through dialogue.

In addition to the four quoted supplications, there are numerous references to prayer, especially in the final section of the book, which Charles has entitled "The Epistle of Baruch which He Wrote to the Nine and a Half Tribes."[2] But even previous to that concluding section, the author of the apocalypse urges that Hezekiah's prayer was heard by God because the former was righteous.[3] Both Hezekiah's righteousness and wisdom militate in favor of his receiving a divine response to his prayer. "And the Mighty One heard him, for Hezekiah was wise, and He had respect unto his prayer, because he was righteous."[4] Later the author materially alters his position by suggesting that the prayer of the sinful Manasseh was heard.[5] Thus, the supplication of the wicked might receive an answer along with the prayer of the righteous. In the "Epistle to the Nine and a Half Tribes" are several familiar themes: (1) After having mourned over Zion, Baruch prays

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[1]R. H. Charles, The Apocalypse of Baruch (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896) pp. 9 (note to 5:7).

[2]Ibid., p. 124.

[3]Apocalypse of Baruch 63:5.

[4]Apocalypse of Baruch 63:5.

[5]Apocalypse of Baruch 64:8.

for mercy from the Most High, asking: "How long will these things endure for us? and will these evils come upon us always?"[1] (2) The Seer's suggestion that one must pray diligently and sincerely is a familiar theme.[2] (3) Then he insists that God hears the prayer of righteous men, implying that the intercession of the patriarchs, because they were righteous, was heard. This is a recurring theme throughout our period. Finally (4), the author, expressing a thesis similar to one in the Similitudes of Enoch, suggests that on the Day of Judgment it will be too late to pray.[3] Putting it forcibly, the book affirms that there will be no "place for prayer, nor sending of petitions, nor receiving of knowledge, nor giving of love, nor place of repentance, nor supplication for offenses, nor intercession of the fathers, nor prayer of the prophets, nor help of the righteous."[4] In conclusion, then, the Apocalypse of Baruch furnishes a brilliant insight into the nature of prayer in the later intertestamental period. The author has profound faith in the immediate efficacy of petitions. The prayers which are quoted are gems of rhetoric and beauty. Although they lack the conciseness of the supplications in First and Second Maccabees, or the developed style of the Prayer of Manasseh, they are worthy productions of their Jewish author.

While bearing a title similar to that of the apocalypse, the Book of Baruch is, in several essentials, vastly different. It is chiefly liturgical, reflecting the age which saw the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Of composite authorship, the book is a collection of different pieces from various times. But it is the first of the four sections (i.e., 1:1-3:8)[5] which is of most interest to the student of prayer, for this introductory

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[1] Apocalypse of Baruch 81:2f. [2] Apocalypse of Baruch 84:10.
[3] Apocalypse of Baruch 85:12. [4] Apocalypse of Baruch 85:12.
[5] Cf. the Book of Baruch 1:1-3:8; 3:9-4:4; 4:5-5:9; 6:1-73 for these four divisions.

division contains praises to God, a confession of sin, and an extended prayer for Divine mercy.[1] While the style of this section is essentially liturgical, it exhibits many of the prayer forms found in the more spontaneous prophetic prayers. Praise, confession, expression of humility, and requests for Divine mercy are all constituents of this prayer. Three of its characteristics are unique: (1) the extended length; (2) the absence of a doxology; (3) the inclusion of scriptural passages within the supplication itself. It is uncommon to discover in a book of such relative brevity a prayer that constitutes nearly a fifth of the entire length. As has been seen, the opening section includes, besides the prayer, both praise to God and confession of sin. Therefore, because these elements of praise and confession occur both within and without the supplication itself, the entire first division of the book is prayer-like in structure. The absence of a doxology is somewhat unusual in a prayer as complete as this one. Rather than concluding in some outburst of praise, this petition ends with the following words: "here we are today in exile, where you have scattered us, to be reproached and cursed and condemned for all the iniquities of our forefathers who rebelled against the Lord our God."[2] Such an abrupt termination might be an indication either that the prayer was originally composed without a doxology, or that the concluding passages have been lost. The fact that a poetical section of wisdom literature, different in style and content from the preceding verses, immediately follows the prayer, makes more plausible the belief that the doxology, although originally a part of the supplication, has been omitted by the final editor. Finally, the inclusion of two scriptural passages within the text of the

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[1]The Book of Baruch 2:11-3:8.

[2]The Book of Baruch 3:8.

prayer itself is unique. God's previous commands mediated by Jeremiah to Israel are recalled and quoted (2:21-23), along with His warning to Moses concerning the future sins of Israel (2:29-35). The Lord had ordered Israel through the words of Jeremiah to serve the King of Babylon, but the people had disobeyed. Subsequently, the words of Jeremiah are quoted, and the Jewish disobedience is pointed out. Later, the predictions given to Moses by God are recorded. Although such scriptual references included within a supplication are perhaps evidence of its liturgical nature, such a phenomenon is unusual for our period. Because this petition exhibits, therefore, several unique characteristics along with its adherence to traditional forms, it contributes to our general knowledge of the nature of intertestamental prayer.

Several of the principles which have been observed in the Book of Baruch apply likewise to the writing which shall be considered as the last of the compositions of our period: i.e., the Ezra Apocalypse, more frequently called IV Ezra. Because this, too, is a composite work, few general principles concerning its concepts about prayer may be discovered. Considered technically, Ch. 1-2 constitute II Esdras, 3-14 equal IV Esdras , and 15-16 make up V Esdras. The first two chapters contain no supplications, although the word "prayer," or its equivalent, twice appears; once in an obscure passage which suggests that God Himself has prayed for Israel to become His people (1:28); again when the Seer is advised to pray for "few days," i.e., for the rapid termination of time (2:13). The final section (Ch. 15-16) is one of those rare passages in intertestamental literature where neither a supplication nor the word "prayer" are found.

Although these closing chapters are lengthy discussions of the evils and divine judgments which are imminent, they are concerned with neither examples of nor theories about prayer.

But the important sections of IV Ezra (Ch. 3-14) are surely prayer-centered. If all of the utterances which the Seer directs heavenward, either to God or to Uriel, be called "prayers," there are literally dozens of them. But when one, by a careful selection, rules out all of those passages which describe actual dialogues between Ezra and the divine beings, there are at least nine prayers (3:4-36; 5:23-30; 6:38-59; 8:20-36; 10:38; 12:7-9; 13:14-20; 14:19-26). With the exception of Ezra's glorious intercession for sinners (8:20-36), there is such an absence of the usual prayer structures, however, that some of the passages listed above have been chosen almost arbitrarily, such selection being based upon either Oesterley's listing them as prayers or upon the suggestions with the text itself which make the general nature of the passages clear. The ever-recurring dialogues between the Seer and God or the angel confuse the matter, for not only do they precede and follow virtually every supplication, but they are frequently so elaborate and well-fashioned as to resemble prayers.

While not as evident as those in the Apocalypse of Baruch, rather clear-cut divisions occur in IV Ezra, each either beginning with, or including, some supplication. At the opening of the first, second, third, and fourth visions, prayers occur. Although these are not of such uniform length as those found in the Apocalypse of Baruch, they express interrelated themes. Because Ezra's supplications are little more than blunt requests for insight, frequently put in the form of direct questions, they omit most

all of the elements found in the typical prayers of the period. Praise, penitence, confession, and doxology are strangely lacking. Usually the petitions, after dwelling at length upon problems of history, creation, or nature, conclude with the posing of some perplexing question. The pessimism which pervades the writing is reflected in the prayers, whose chief burden is to inquire why the righteous Israel must suffer oppression at the hands of the wicked heathen. The first of these prayers presents a retrospective view of the world's history from creation, continuing through the experiences of the Jewish patriarchs and the Exodus, down to the Exile, and concluding with the question: Is Israel more sinful than Babylon that she should be thus punished?[1] In response to the query the angel Uriel appears before Ezra. The second supplication describes God as ruler of nature and as One who has chosen certain animals, a particular city (Zion), and a single people (Israel).[2] The petition is short and beautifully phrased, but again, it is essentially a request for understanding. The third prayer outlines the seven days of creation, concluding with the inevitable problem: If the world has been created for Israel's benefit, why must she be oppressed?[3] The final petition in this series, recalling the divine mercies of the past, especially the imparting of the Law, and lamenting the failure of Israel to obey the statutes, insists that the Law is eternal and will endure.[4] Because there is neither request nor petition herein, this is a most peculiar prayer. Yet it may be included as one of the four major supplications, all of which are somewhat similar in theme.

Roughly corresponding to this symmetrical pattern are the three requests by Uriel that the Seer spend a period of fasting and prayer in order

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[1] IV Ezra 3:4-36.
[2] IV Ezra 5:23-30.
[3] IV Ezra 6:38-59.
[4] IV Ezra 9:29-38.

that further revelations may be vouchsafed to him. At the conclusion of three of the visions the angel commands Ezra to fast and pray (5:13; 6:31; and 9:23ff). Coming at the end of one vision, this command thus precedes the prayer which begins the next vision. Therefore, in three instances the prayers which have been observed above are preceded by this injunction that the Seer fast and pray. After concluding his tale of the horrible events which are to occur, Uriel says: "These things I am permitted to tell you, but if you pray again and weep as you do now, and fast seven days, you will again hear greater things than these."[1] Only in 9:23 are the instructions varied; because the Seer is instructed to eat the flowers of the field, the fast is not to be complete. Therefore, the visions which are described come as a direct result of these periods of fasting and praying.

But at Ch. 11 comes a break in the practices concerning prayer. In the preceding section (Ch. 4-10) the Seer first poses his question and only then receives the revelation. The reverse, however, is true of the eagle vision, where the dream comes at the outset and is only then followed by Ezra's prayer for interpretation. Moreover, prayer styles are considerably different in this section. The supplications are less elaborate and verbous. After Ezra in his dream has been confronted with the amazing vision, he awakes and prays for strength and insight, saying:

> O Lord that bearest rule, if I have found favor in thy sight, and if I am justified with thee above many others, and if my prayer indeed be come up before thy face; strengthen me then, and shew me thy servant the interpretation and plain meaning of this fearful vision, that thou mayest perfectly comfort my soul. For thou hast judged me worthy to shew me the end of time and the last times.[2]

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[1] IV Ezra 5:13.

[2] IV Ezra 12:7-9.

How different is this supplication from that which precedes the first of the visions at 3:4-36! In the former the long historical passages are absent, just as are the perplexing queries which form the conclusion of 3:4-36. Moreover, the prayer quoted above (12:7-9) adheres far more closely to the strict prayer forms than do any that have thus far been examined. Hints of praise and humiliation are more evident here than elsewhere, while the actual petition is made more specific and concrete. But there is not a complete break between the four prayers which precede the first visions on the one hand and this one which follows the dream on the other hand. The invocation in three of them is indentical, i.e., "O Lord that bearest rule," (Cf. 3:4; 5:23; and 12:7). Likewise, after receiving the vision of the man from the sea (13:1-13), Ezra utters a short prayer similar to that of 12:7-9. It too exhibits more normal prayer forms, except that it concludes with a short parenthetical passage outlining the relative misfortune of those who will live to see the conclusion of the present world-order and those who will die before the end.[1]

But, in addition to these differences in prayer style which appear after Ch. 11, the admonitions which are given to the Seer are different. After hearing the interpretation of the Eagle Vision, he is instructed to wait seven days for further revelation, but is not told to fast or pray.[2] When the Vision of the Man from the Sea has been interpreted to him, the Seer, in response to the suggestion of the Most High, goes and sits three days awaiting additional illumination.[3] In neither of these instances does the Seer pray as he has done thrice before. The being who interprets the visions, moreover, is never specifically named in this section, but

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[1] IV Ezra 13:14-20.

[2] IV Ezra 12:39.

[3] IV Ezra 13:58.

from implication it is apparent that not Uriel, but the Most High Himself answers the prayers. Therefore, in structure and content the prayers, along with the context in which they are imbedded, are dissimilar from those in the portions of the book prior to Ch. 11.

One additional supplication of Ezra's must be considered. In all of the intertestamental literature there is no more superb prayer than that found in IV Ezra 8:19-36. Liturgical in style, stately in phraseology, and powerful in emotional value, it serves as a fitting climax to any study of the prayers in this great literature. There is first an address to God, containing a detailed list of the divine attributes, and striking the note of praise which is lacking in so many of the supplications in IV Ezra:

> O Lord, thou that abidest forever, whose eyes are exalted, and whose chambers are in the air; whose throne is inestimable; whose glory may not be comprehended; before whom the hosts of angels stand with trembling, at whose bidding they are changed to wind and fire; whose word is sure, and sayings constant; whose ordinance is strong, and commandment fearful; whose look drieth up the depths, and whose indignation maketh the mountains to melt away, and whose truth beareth witness: hear, O Lord the prayer of thy servant....[1]

After these exalted and elaborate affirmations of God's power and majesty, the Seer humbles himself, calling himself "thy servant." Then follow the petitions, interspersed with confession and intercession. The Seer pleads with God to overlook the sins of Israel and to judge her on the basis of the deeds of the righteous rather than upon those of the wicked. He entreats: "Think not upon those that have walked feignedly before thee; but remember them which have willingly known thy fear."[2] Then he calls attention to the universal sinfulness of mankind, recognizing that he and his fathers have sinned, and pleading that God may be merciful. With pro-

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[1]IV Ezra 8:20-24.

[2]IV Ezra 8:28.

foundly stirring words, he brings the prayer to a climax:

> For what is man, that thou shouldest take displeasure at him? or what is a corruptible race, that thou shouldest be so bitter toward it? For in truth there is no man among them that be born, but he hath dealt wickedly; and among them that have lived there is none which hath not done amiss.[1]

There is deep pathos in these words. The Seer recognizes his own sinfulness and that of all men in the sight of God's glory. He returns to his basic question: Why should Israel be punished for her sin any more than other nations? for all the world is sinful; every race is wicked! Yet, the final verse, which in many ways resembles a doxology, suggests that if God is merciful, His praises shall be declared. "For in this, O Lord, thy righteousness and thy goodness shall be declared, if thou be merciful unto them which have no store of good works."[2]

The Seer therefore prays that God will shed His grace upon the sinner, especially upon the one who has no merits of his own. The outstanding elements in the prayer are its simplicity, sincerity, emotional quality, and religious insight. God is appealed to as a Lord of mercy and righteousness. Such a supplication, along with those in the Prayer of Manasseh and the Wisdom of Solomon, mark the apex of Jewish devotional life. It is an outpouring of the spirit which is found nowhere else in this apocalypse. Indeed, it serves as a splendid conclusion to our study of the prayers in the various books. Not everywhere throughout this literature are prayers of such lofty calibre to be found. Yet one is impressed that here and there, in the earlier books as well as in the later ones, these glorious petitions, confessions, and intercessions stand out above all their surroundings as gems in a drab setting.

THE TYPES OF PRAYER FOUND IN THE INTERTESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

As might logically be expected, petitions constitute, in this literature, the most numerous class of prayers. There are requests for: (1) short life and the rapid advent of the Day of the Lord; (2) increase in the nation's population; (3) mercy; (4) protection of the Temple from pollution; (5) vengeance and victory; (6) Wisdom and understanding. Because the petitions for victory and for Wisdom are somewhat more numerous and distinctive, independent discussions will be reserved for them. But the remainder of the supplications were uttered under unique conditions and are but examples of the multitudinous forms of petition. Any examination of the types of prayer employed by the intertestamental Jews must begin, therefore, with a discussion of these varied illustrations of petition.

The astonishing reference to a prayer for short life appears in IV Ezra 2:13: "Ask and you will receive; pray for few days for yourselves, that they may be shortened; the kingdom is already prepared for you; be on the watch." Not only does such a citation suggest that God hears a request and surely grants it, but it proposes that men should pray for: (1) the termination of life; (2) the speedy approach of the Day of the Lord. This verse actually states only that men should pray for short life and does not explicitly enjoin them to request the advent of the Kingdom of the Lord. Yet from two clues it is seen that this passage urges them to pray for such a "Coming." First, the imminent approach of the Kingdom is vividly described in that very passage. Because the Kingdom is prepared for men, they must be on the watch for it. In

the verse, therfore, which urges men to pray for short life appears also the prediction of the arrival of the Kingdom. Second, the word employed is not "self" but "selves," implying that men in the plural, taken as a class, are to pray. Why should all men pray for short life? Undoubtedly it is because they will receive the Kingdom when they die. To them, at least, the Kingdom will come more quickly if the length of their lives is shortened; hence, IV Ezra 2:13 is a petition for the rapid termination of life and the consequent coming of a Kingdom which is already prepared.

Equally interesting and exceptional is the prayer of Moses, asking God to increase the population of Israel. Only indirectly is such a supplication mentioned, where, in the Assumption of Moses, the following words appear: "For of them there will be 600,000 men, for these have multiplied to this degree through thy prayers, (my) lord Moses."[1] Moses, seeking the security of Israel, prays that her numbers may be increased. The historical basis of that petition is obscure, so that the author of the Assumption may conceivably have (1) based the tale upon authentic Old Testament accounts; (2) fabricated the story in its entirety. Yet, by the very act of including such a tale, the author indicates his belief in both the efficacy and possibility of such a prayer. Although the custom of praying for offspring was not a novelty--Hannah, centuries before had prayed for a son--it is significant to discover reference to the practice in the later days of the intertestamental period. To have faith in a prayer for increased population is to believe that God has some vital control over the birth-process. The pseudony-

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[1]The Assumption of Moses 11:14.

mous author of the Assumption of Moses obviously admits this possibility. Likewise the Apocalypse of Baruch alludes to a parallel petition: "and ye women, pray not that ye may bear."[1] Such a supplication again suggests belief that God has a direct control over the generative process. Whatever the theological connotations, however, at least two intertestamental writers believed that petitions directed to God could influence population.

In the same Apocalypse of Baruch a petition for mercy appears. A prayer of considerable length, it asks God, after a considerable section of praise and self-humiliation, for succour and protection.[2] In large measure it is divorced from any concrete situation, being, as it were, independent of a practical context. It follows a period of fasting, and merely evokes God's mercy for sinful, lowly man. Although it thus does not arise from any concrete state of affairs, it is truly a prayer for mercy. Yet, just like all prayers that have not one specific goal but many goals centering in a single urge and undertone of feeling, this supplication is a rambling petition for aid, protection, mercy, and salvation. The supplicant senses his humility when contrasted with the splendor of God, and from that feeling utters a number of fervent petitions, each in a sense related to, but not identical with, the other. It is, therefore, a petition directed not so much to the attainment of a particular goal as to the expression of an inward feeling and urge. Nevertheless, this series of petitions, all related and all uttered from one outpouring of the spirit, actually constitute a prayer for mercy.

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 10:13.

[2]The Apocalypse of Baruch 48:2-24.

First, Second, and Third Maccabees all contain petitions for protection of the Temple against pollution. I Maccabees 7:33-50 recounts the story of Nicanor's threat to destroy the sanctuary unless Judas is surrendered and it quotes the prayers uttered by the priests, and later by Judas, for the protection of the sacred site. II Maccabees 14:33-15:36 presents a closely parallel account, in which the Jewish heroes again ask God to protect the Temple from the heathen. II Maccabees 3:13-30 tells a somewhat altered but related tale. Heliodorus attempts to collect tribute money and to loot the Temple-treasury, only to be deterred by the mysterious rider who strikes him down and thrashes him. It is in III Maccabees 1:10-2:24 that the parallel to that story appears. Although in various non-essentials this account differs from that of II Maccabees 3:13-30, the theme is virtually identical. This time it is the heathen Philopater who attempts to effect an entry into the sanctuary, but without success. The priests and the populace petition God for preservation of the holy-of-holies and He responds. Hence, although details of the episodes are dissimilar, one well-attested form of petition was the request for preservation of the Temple's sanctity.

Two of the most common types of petition were requests for (1) Wisdom, and (2) vengeance and victory. It is in the later literature of the intertestamental period that the prayers for Wisdom and understanding appear; i.e., in the Wisdom of Solomon, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and IV Ezra. Of the Wisdom of Solomon 9:1-18, G. H. Box says: "In the... beautiful prayer Solomon prays for the gift of wisdom, pleading his own human weakness and the greatness of his task."[1] Likewise, in Wisdom 7:7

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[1]G. H. Box, Judaism in the Greek Period, The Clarendon Bible, Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1932) V., 175.

appear the words: "Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called, and the spirit of wisdom came to me." Although no actual words of any prayer are here quoted, the reference implies not only that he considers "understanding" and "wisdom" to be relatively synonymous concepts, but that both of them have come to him as a result of prayer. It is for the hypostasized Wisdom, the one who may be sent to dwell with men, that Solomon prays. From his youth up he has sought to take her for his bride.[1] Now he asks God to give her to him.[2] The petition is answered; Wisdom is a gift that God can and will bestow upon the supplicant who prays for it. Similarly, Baruch utters a petition for enlightenment.[3] Apparently the insight and understanding which are so highly prized by the Apocalyptists are of such nature that they may be imparted to none but the prayerful.[4] Baruch's prayer is offered in response to a peculiarly confused vision which has appeared to him and which he cannot interpret. In response to his prayer for divine explanation, the Seer receives an answer: "And he...said unto me: 'This is the interpretation of the vision which thou hast seen."[5] So enlightenment and understanding, just as the more hypostasized Wisdom, in the Wisdom of Solomon, are forthcoming as a result of petition. In his prayer, Baruch attributes to God the ability to enlighten the human mind: "O Lord, my Lord," says the Seer, "Thou dost always enlighten those who are led by understanding. Thy law is life, and Thy wisdom is right guidance."[6] The Seer thus doubly

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[1]The Wisdom of Solomon 8:2.

[2]The Wisdom of Solomon 9:3.

[3]The Apocalypse of Baruch 38:1-4.

[4]Cf. Walker, op. cit., p. 23.

[5]The Apocalypse of Baruch 39:1.

[6]The Apocalypse of Baruch 38:1f.

attests to his belief in petitions for understanding, i.e., he prays specifically for enlightenment and asserts within the supplication itself that God affords understanding to those who seek and deserve it. Ben Sirach likewise describes graphically his search for Wisdom through prayer:

> When I was very young, before I went on my wanderings,
> I sought Wisdom expressly in my prayer;
> In front of the temple I asked for her,
> And I will search for her unto the end.[1]

Other petitions for enlightenment appear in IV Ezra. The Seer grapples, in the opening section of the book, with a fundamental but confused problem: "Why should God on the one hand spare the sinful, ungodly nations, and on the other hand ruthlessly punish his own people, the more righteous Israel?" This introductory chapter thus places the essential problem of the book in the form of an interrogation. Although the chapter which poses the question is nowhere, in the traditional translation, called a "prayer," we shall classify it as such. In several ways this lengthy section does not adhere to the accepted forms of supplication, and perhaps it is with real justification that Oesterley has entitled it a "perplexity." Yet because the words are obviously directed toward God and assume the form neither of a dialogue nor of a soliloquy, they constitute a prayer. The chapter does not describe a conversation engaged in by both God and the Seer, nor a meditation in which Ezra talks only to himself. Since the Seer frequently employs the words "Thou" or "Thine," suggesting that the utterance is directed toward divinity, we may call these verses a "prayer." Moreover, the words "wisdom" or "enlightenment" are not included, but because Ezra directs pointed questions to

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[1] Ben Sirach 51:13f.

God[1] and obviously desires an answer, this is a prayer for understanding and illumination. Although he is not asking for the interpretation of a vision, as was Baruch, Ezra seeks instead to know why God allows the wicked to prosper. Thus the basic problem of the book is outlined in this long petition for enlightenment.

Likewise, in IV Ezra 4:51f., another prayer is cast in the form of a question. The Seer asks how long he will live and whether he will be still alive on the day of judgment. Although the angel Uriel, who has been sent to interpret the visions, does not give a definite answer, the petition which Salathiel offers actually implies a request for wisdom and enlightenment.

But even more numerous than petitions for intellectual illumination were those for victory and vengeance, chiefly military. Such prayers were no exclusive and unique product of the intertestamental period, for even in the early Old Testament times military chieftains, when desiring victory, frequently offered supplications requesting it. John Calvin briefly discusses prayers of this type. In his Institutes of the Christian Religion, he concludes his elaborate discussion of the rules for effective prayer with the following paragraph:

> The Scripture relates that the Lord has complied with some prayers, which nevertheless did not arise from a calm or well-regulated heart. Jotham, for a just cause indeed, but from the impulse of rage, resentment, and revenge, devoted the inhabitants of Shechem to the destruction which afterwards fell upon them (Judges ix. 20)....Samson also was hurried away by a similar fervour when he said 'O Lord, strengthen me, that I may be avenged of the Philistines (Judges xvi. 28).' For though there was some mixture of honest zeal, yet it was a violent, and therefore sinful, avidity of revenge which predominated, God granted the request.[2]

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[1]IV Ezra 3:30-35.

[2]John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, Chapter xx, Section xv.

But such petitions are common in intertestamental times. The plot of the Book of Judith centers around a particularly potent prayer for vengeance.[1] In fact, Judith asks God to aid her in the deceit which her lips utter and her actions betray so that she can overthrow the oppressor. The Lord must dash down the strength and greatness of the enemy. The spiteful prayer closes with the dramatic words:

> Yea, yea, God of my father, and God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of the heavens and of the earth, Creator of the waters, King of every creature, hear thou my prayer: and make my speech and deceit to be their wound and stripe, who have purposed hard things against thy covenant, and thy hallowed house... And make every nation and tribe of thing to know that thou art God, the God of all power and might....[2]

This indeed is a powerfully worded petition, asking God to assert Himself by striking down that enemy. Thus the prayer begins by recalling how God has taken vengeance in the past and concludes by requesting Him to do so again. In Judith's petition both victory and vengeance are requested, but the emphasis is upon the latter. In First and Second Maccabees this order is reversed. Undoubtedly there is desire for revenge in the Maccabean prayers, but generally their greatest interest is in victory. The fervent supplication uttered by the people at Nicanor's attempt to enter the Temple, contained the element of vengeance. First the priests and later Judas himself seek revenge, not for wrongs done to them personally, but because Nicanor has blasphemed against the Temple. In their prayer the priests, significantly enough, cry out these words: "take vengeance on this man and his army, and let them fall

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[1]The Book of Judith 9:2-14.

[2]The Book of Judith 9:12-14.

by the sword; remember their blasphemies, and suffer them not to live any longer."[1] Later, when Judas prays, his emphasis is similar: "Even so crush this army before us today...."[2] These are earnest supplications for both victory and vengeance.

The author of II Maccabees portrays Judas as praying for victory in many of his major battles. Immediately before (1) he attacks the forts of Idumea, killing twenty-thousand of the enemy (10:16), (2) he fights the hated Timotheus at Gazara (10:26), (3) he struggles against Lysias, the King's guardian, at Bethsura (11:6), (4) he defeats the governor of Idumea, Gorgias, at Mareshah (12:36f.), and (5) he finally overcomes Nicanor, the last of his great antagonists, just outside Jerusalem (15:22-27), Judas offers actual prayers for victory. Furthermore, the account, although not specifically asserting that he prayed, suggests that Judas "called upon the Lord" when he first organized his army (8:2), when he hoped the Jews which had been taken captive by Nicanor might be freed (8:14-16), when he attacked the murderers of Joppa (12:5), when he attacked the fortified city of Caspin (12:15), when he overcame King Antiochus Eupator (13:9-17), and when he learned that Nicanor was sending his first expedition against him (14:15). In only four cases does Judas fail to offer some kind of prayer or at least to call upon the Lord: (1) when, early in his career, he engages in his first minor raids (8:6,7); (2) when he battles against Timotheus and Bacchides (8:30-33); (3) when he struggles against the Arabs (12:10-12); and (4) when he marches against the cities of Carnaim and Ephron (12:26f). In II Maccabees, therefore, prayers for victory are extremely numerous. Thus by 50 B. C., the date of composition for II Maccabees, petitions for victory were customary. Whether

the prayers are historical and actually uttered by Judas, or are merely written into the account by the author, their very presence in II Maccabees indicates that they were commonly accepted as legitimate aids for producing military victories.

Finally, there were petitions for protection against evil spirits. Although in many ways the prayer which Noah utters requesting the destruction of the demons is intercessory in nature, it is essentially a petition. The evil sons of the fallen Watchers are leading Noah's children astray; so for his sake and theirs he pleads:

> Thou knowest how Thy Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, acted in my day: and as for these spirits which are living, imprison them and hold them fast in the place of condemnation, and let them not bring destruction upon the sons of thy servant, my God.[1]

Compared with Tobit, where magical devices are thought sufficient to drive away evil spirits, Noah's prayer is highly advanced. Prayer to God, not magical incantations, can control the spirits. In fact, within the petition itself Noah utters some illuminating words: "And let them not rule over the spirits of the living; for Thou alone canst exercise dominion over them."[2] Unfortunately, however, the author of this Noah-fragment is not entirely consistent, for subsequently in the same chapter he implies that magical devices are efficacious against the spirits.[3] Noah is shown all of the necessary medicines and herbs and all the ways of healing his children: "Thus the evil spirits were precluded from (hurting) the sons of Noah."[4] Magic and prayer run hand in

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[1]The Book of Jubilees 10:3-6.

[2]The Book of Jubilees 10:6a.

[3]The Book of Jubilees 10:12f.

[4]The Book of Jubilees 10:13b.

hand here, for, in response to the supplication, nine-tenths of the spirits are carried away and bound, but the other tenth remain and are rendered harmless by the herbs. Abraham, also, just as he is preparing to leave Haran, prays, and one of the elements of his petition is a request for deliverance from the hands of evil spirits.[1] Petitions were frequent, therefore, in many of the writings of our period. Thomas Walker has listed the many petitions which appear in Ben Sirach alone: "Prayer might be for...self-control, or enlightenment on the difficult duties of a counsellor, or justice for the poor, or recovery of the sick (Cf. Sir. xxiii, 3-6; xxxvii. 15; xxxviii. 9-14)."[2] Other books contain a similar number of petitions. We have discovered prayers for short-life, increased population, mercy, Wisdom, and victory. Thus the predominant type of prayer is the request the expression of a desire, the petition.

Next in frequency, variety, and importance are the intercessory prayers. Again, this form of supplication is not exclusively the product of the intertestamental period, for even in Old Testament days intercession was not entirely unknown. According to John Calvin, the Jews felt there must always be a Mediator between them and God.

> For this reason the Lord had appointed in the Law that the priest alone should enter the sanctuary, bearing on his shoulders the names of the tribes of Israel, and the same number of precious stones before his breast; but that the people should stand without in the court, and there unite their prayers with those of the priest.[3]

Thus the sacred ceremony suggests that the Jews felt themselves in need of a Mediator who would carry on his shoulders, and bind to his breast,

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[1]The Book of Jubilees 12:20. [2]Walker op. cit., p. 21f.

[3]Calvin, Institutes, Book III., Chapter xx., Section xviii.

symbols representing the people. Calvin here refers to Exodus 28, and though his suggestion is illuminating, it is misleading to affirm that the Jews always sensed a need for a Mediator. Surely few of the patriarchs and the prophets believed it either necessary or desirable to have a Mediator operating between themselves and God. Some intercessory prayers there assuredly were, but most petitions were directed openly and immediately to God. Calvin is more nearly correct when, in his discussion of the saints as mediators, he urges that the prayers of the Jews were never pointed directly toward the saints. They never prayed to their dead heroes and patriarchs. Rather than requesting the intercession of the departed saints, the Israelites "put the Lord in remembrance of his covcenant, in which their most merciful Father has engaged to be propitious and beneficent to them, for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."[1] Israel, according to such an interpretation, did not pray directly to the departed spirits of her fathers; instead she besought God to remember His servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and thus to respond to the prayers of their posterity. In the two sections quoted, Calvin asserts that, although the people of Israel never expected the spirits of their deceased heroes to intercede on their behalf, they believed that the function of the priest was to intercede, praying to God for them.

Whether or not Calvin's statements concerning the Old Testament are accurate, intercessory prayers occur frequently in the intertestamental period. When studying such supplications, it is essential to distinguish two fundamental types: (1) prayer by the living in behalf of either their earthly comrades or their departed forebears, (2) prayer by spiritual beings--either the "souls of the righteous" or the angels--for earthly men. Each of these classes is found prominently throughout

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[1] Ibid., Section xxv.

the literature of the period, but the later writings have more examples of both kinds than do the earlier. The first instance of intercessory prayer uttered by living men occurs in Jubilees. Moses prays for Israel immediately after God has talked with him.[1] Actually the prayer is a petition in which Moses requests God not to forsake Israel; yet it is also an intercession because the great patriarch asks nothing for himself, praying only in behalf of his nation. Likewise, after the evil spirits have led Noah's sons astray, he prays for their protection and deliverance: "Let Thy grace be lift up upon my sons, and let not wicked spirits rule over them lest they should destroy them from the earth."[2] Obviously the prayer (Jubilees 10:3) is essentially intercessory; yet Noah also prays for himself, employing the words: "But do thou bless me and my sons, that we may increase and multiply and replenish the earth."[3] One finds here, therefore, a natural admixture of personal petition and pure intercession. But whether it be Moses praying for Israel or Noah praying for his sons, the implications are the same: i.e., the man with "spiritual standing" before God intercedes for the common, less-religious folk. Noah, in fact, expresses the conviction that God granted him particular portection at the time of the flood. He not only believes himself to be specially "chosen" but thinks that the efficacy of his intercession is most likely to be enhanced because of this unique status. Moses was likewise an elect one of God, and his intercession for Israel was undoubtedly influenced by his own recognition of that fact. The man with "standing" in the eyes of God prayed for those who were more nearly strangers to Him. The Testaments

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[1]The Book of Jubilees 1:19ff.

[2]The Book of Jubilees 10:3.

[3]The Book of Jubilees 10:4.

of the Twelve Patriarchs, a book somewhat similar to Jubilees both in style and purpose, refer to intercessory prayers resembling those of Noah and Moses. They are the prayers of a righteous man in behalf of sinners. Jacob prays for Reuben who has been stricken with a plague because of his wickedness (Testament of Reuben 1:7), for Judah who has transgressed grievously through his love for money (Judah 19:2), and for Gad who because of his sin has become afflicted with a liver disease (Gad 5:9). Jacob saves Gad's life as a result of this last intercession. In the Testament of Benjamin (3:6) Jacob intercedes for Joseph's sons, at the request of Jospeh himself. Jacob was heralded as a righteous man; hence from the frequency with which he is said to have interceded for sinners, we may deduce that the intertestamental Jews believed the prayers of the righteous in behalf of the unrighteous to be most efficacious.

The Apocalypse of Baruch similarly suggests that one's sins may be forgiven as the result of the prayers of others:

> Nay more, we were in our own land, and they helped us when we sinned, and they prayed for us to Him who made us, because they trusted in their works, and the Mighty One heard their prayer and was gracious unto us.[1]

The "they" refers to the "righteous men" and the "holy prophets" of pre-Exilic days; hence it was men who were righteous, who trusted in their "works," that prayed for the sins of their kinsmen. In the Book of Baruch, it is the priest, not a patriarch, who utters a prayer for the people's transgressions. In this book directed to the high priest at Jerusalem by Baruch and the Exiles, the following exhortation appears: "Pray for

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 85:2.

us to the Lord our God, for we have sinned against the Lord our God, and to this day the anger of the Lord and his wrath have not turned away from us."[1] There are several possible interpretations to such a prayer. Perhaps the people felt that because of their sins the petitions they had uttered in their own behalf had been ineffective, God's anger still being unappeased. On the other hand, they may have believed that prayers offered in Jerusalem were more potent than those uttered elsewhere. Finally, the Exiles may have thought that the prayers of a high priest were more valid than were those of any other person. But whatever the interpretation of the verse, this much is certain: the high priest was asked to intercede in behalf of sinful Exiles who felt that their own supplications were not sufficient.

The Wisdom of Solomon relates the tale of a "blameless" man who intercedes for the righteous ones of Israel. Both the sinners and the "just" are perishing from a plague, but the greater concern is expressed over the welfare of the righteous. The reference in Wisdom is a Midrashic interpretation of Aaron's activities in Numbers 16:47. The intertestamental writer presents the details as follows:

> But it befell the righteous also to experience death,
> And a multitude were stricken in the wilderness:
> Howbeit the wrath endured not for long.
> For a blameless man hasted to be their champion:
> Bringing the weapon of his ministry,
> Even prayer and the propitiation of incense.
> He withstood the indignation and put an end to the calamity,
> Showing that he was thy servant.[2]

Although the prayer was not unaccompanied by ritualistic acts, the fact

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[1]The Book of Baruch 1:13.

[2]The Wisdom of Solomon 18:20f.

of Aaron's "blamelessness" is considered, along with intercession, the factor most largely responsible for the miraculous cure of the Israelites. God has been angry with Israel, the righteous as well as the sinner, but the "blameless" Aaron withstands His indignation, putting an end to the calamity and appeasing His wrath. The intercessory prayers of the righteous for both the sinner and the sinless were indeed thought to be powerful!

Furthermore, just as Aaron's supplication brings God's wrath to an end, so Baruch's prayers are as "a strong wall" to Jerusalem, protecting her from His anger. God tells Baruch: "Your works are to this city as a firm pillar, and your prayers as a strong wall."[1] Divine truths are revealed to him for two reasons: (1) so that he may tell them to Jeremiah; (2) so that he (Baruch) may retire from Jerusalem. God specifically desires the Seer to leave the city because his "works" and his prayers are shielding her. As might be expected in this book, which places so much emphasis upon merit and demerit, "works" are efficacious in protecting the city. But prayer seems equally essential. Baruch's supplications are called "a strong wall," and the reference to them is placed at a climactic position within the verse: i.e., at the end.[2] The function of a wall in ancient cities was to protect the enclosed territory from the enemy. The implication of this verse, then, is that the city cannot be destroyed so long as Baruch is praying there. Although the word "intercession" is nowhere employed in this short chapter, the context suggests that Baruch has been interceding in behalf of the

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 2:2.

[2]The Apocalypse of Baruch 2:2.

city. He, a just and honorable man, has requested that God preserve Jerusalem from destruction; so long as the Seer thus prays, the Lord cannot exercise His wrath against the Jews. But now He is revealing the future to Baruch in order that the latter may retire from the city, leaving it vulnerable to divine retribution.

An interesting variation occurs in II Maccabees. At the Battle of Adullam many of Judas' men have fallen, and he discovers that the disaster has come upon them because they have worn the forbidden amulets of the idols of Jamnia. In their perplexity, the army that remains intercedes in behalf of those who have fallen, "begging that the sin that had been committed should be wholly blotted out."[1] The living, by thus praying for their dead companions, evidence belief that prayer can become part of the process of atoning for the sins of the dead. The first prayers for the deceased in Israel's thought are connected with the idea of resurrection. The writer of II Maccabees says:

> For if he had not expected that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead; or if it was through regard for the splendid reward destined for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be set free from their sin.[2]

Because only one clear-cut reference to prayer for the dead appears in this literature, one might be led to conclude that such intercessions were relatively unknown. Yet the author does not tell the incident as though he thought it to be unique. Quite the reverse! He uses the fact that Judas prayed for the dead as a proof for resurrection of the body.[3] If Judas' prayer were in itself unusual, it is not likely that

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[1]II Maccabees 12:40-45.

[2]II Maccabees 12:44f. (Cf. H. B. Swete, "Prayer for the Departed in the First Four Centuries" Journal of Theological Studies, 1907, viii. 500.

[3]II Maccabees 12:44.

it would have been pointed out as a proof-text. An opposite interpretation may be conceivable, however. Prayers for the dead along with belief in resurrection may have been so uncommon that the writer of II Maccabees, seeking proof for his Pharisaic belief in resurrection, and finding little evidence of prayer for the dead, points to the fact that Judas allegedly prayed for his departed soldiers. If prayers for the deceased were common, why should the author have attempted to link this particular story with teachings about the resurrection? Was it not to find the name of some hero who had prayed for the dead and had believed in resurrection? But whether intercession for the dead was so common that the author tells the story of Judas' prayer with no explanation about its uniqueness, or whether it was so rare that he chooses the story of Judas to prove his great belief in immortality, much later dogma has been built upon this tale in II Maccabees. Thus, not only were there prayers of the living for the living, but in at least one recorded instance, the living interceded for the dead. Furthermore, most of these supplications concerned forgiveness of sins. Such is to be expected, however, for Israel believed that calamaties came as a direct result of transgressions. If those disasters were to be removed, the sins must be forgiven. Therein lies the reason for the preponderance of intercessory prayers uttered by the righteous in behalf of the unrighteous.

Perhaps the patriarch whose name is most frequently associated with such intercession is Moses, who, according to Joshua, prayed in Israel's behalf every day.[1] Joshua, referring to a later generation, says

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[1]The Assumption of Moses 11:11-17.

boldly:

> They have no advocate to offer prayers on their behalf to the Lord, as did Moses the great messenger, who every hour day and night had his knees fixed to the earth, praying and looking for help to Him that ruleth all the world with compassion and righteousness, calling to mind the covenant of the fathers and propitiating the Lord with the oath.[1]

So well-known were his prayers of intercession while he lived on earth that in later times he was thought of as fulfilling a similar function in the spiritual world. "During his life he was Israel's intercessor with God....But his relation to Israel did not cease with his death; he was appointed by God to be their intercessor in the spiritual world...."[2] The Book of Jubilees records a prayer uttered by Moses before his death in behalf of Israel. He pleads for God not to forget His inheritance and urges Him to have mercy upon Israel.[3] Thus the activity of Moses serves as a transition between the two types of intercession which we have thought to exist: (1) prayers of the living; (2) prayers of the deceased "righteous ones" and the angels. Moses not only interceded while he lived on the earth, but he was one of the great spiritual intercessors after he died. To the deceased Jeremiah, likewise, this office of praying on behalf of Israel is frequently ascribed.[4] It is in II Maccabees that the former High Priest Onias had just made intercession for all of Israel:

> Then in the same fashion another man appeared, distinguished by his gray hair and dignity, and wrapped in marvelous, most majestic sublimity; and Onias answered and said,
> 'This is Jeremiah, the prophet of God, who loves the brothers

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[1]The Asumption of Moses 11:11.

[2]R. H. Charles, The Assumption of Moses (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1897), p. lviii, commenting on As. of Mos. 11:11, 17, & 12:6.

[3]The Book of Jubilees 1:19-21.

[4]Cf. Charles, The Assumption of Moses, op. cit., p. 47.

and prays fervently for the people and the holy city.'[1]

In regard to the assignment of the intercessory function to the living and deceased patriarchs, R. H. Charles comments:

> This was a genuinely Jewish conception, and not borrowed from Christianity. Thus,...Jeremiah was held to discharge this office in the spiritual world, 2 Macc. xv. 14. Enoch also (Slav. En. Mss. AB lxiv. 5) was conceived of as 'one who removes the sins of men.' Philo speaks of the intercessions and prayers offered on behalf of Israel by the righteous forefathers of the nation: these intercessions of the departed saints of Israel were to be the second of the three chief means for the restoration of their descendants....[2]

Walker insists that, rather than Moses, it was chiefly Enoch and Jeremiah who were looked to as spiritual intercessors;[3] yet he too lists Moses as the "people's advocate to offer prayers on their behalf to the Lord."[4] But, whatever the name of the patriarch or father who uttered the prayer, these glorified men were frequently substituted for the intercessory angels.

It is in the Book of Enoch that intercessory prayers by angels are most prominent. Both in 1-36 and 37-72 (the Similitudes) Enoch describes the intercession of angels for men. Although in many essentials these two sections of Enoch are dissimilar--forcing the conclusion that they come from different writers and periods,--they both mention angelic intercessors. According to Enoch 1-36, it is the four great Archangels and the Watchers who intercede for men, while in the Similitudes both the Archangel Gabriel and the regular angels are intercessors. In the former section, Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel, looking down from paradise and discovering the bloodshed and lawlessness upon the earth,

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[1] II Maccabees 15:13f.

[2] Charles, The Assumption of Moses, op. cit., p. 49.

[3] Walker, op. cit., p. 12.

[4] Ibid.

pray to God.[1] All four of them are represented as having uttered the petition, and probably no one of them was set apart as the supreme Intercessor. The prayer is from some view points embellished and redundant, but its purpose is clear: i.e., to bring to God's attention the horrible conditions that have arisen among men because of the sins of the Watchers and to ask Him what ought to be done. The Archangels do not ask God to forgive men's sins nor to protect them from the enemy but to hear the cry of the righteous for justice. The angels thus act as mediators, bringing before God the anguished cries of men for deliverance from the throes of lawlessness. Enoch 15:2 implies that, although the Watchers have rendered themselves unworthy by their sinfulness, they ought ideally to take their place along side the Archangels as intercessors. When speaking about these sinful Watchers, God says to Enoch, "And go, say to the watchers of heaven, who have sent thee to intercede for them: you should intercede for men, and not men for you."[2] The suggestion is, of course, that the Watchers, except for their sin, could have been intercessors, and that they may once have fulfilled their rightful function in those mythical days before the Fall. Furthermore, it implies that even among the heavenly hosts only the righteous can operate effectively as intercessors. Sinless Watchers could intercede, but the fallen could not.

The Similitudes closely resemble Enoch 1-36 in many of these emphases. When Enoch is carried away by the wind to the end of the heavens, he sees the righteous and holy ones praying and interceding for men. The author is not explicit as one might wish and he does not state whether these righteous ones are merely the souls of the departed

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[1]Enoch 9:4-11.

[2]Enoch 15:2.

saints of Israel or whether they are angels. It may be, indeed, that the word "angel" is merely another name for the souls of the righteous dead. Yet such a contention is difficult to maintain in the light of the author's description of the scene:

> Here mine eyes saw their dwellings with His righteous angels, and their resting-places with the holy, and they petitioned, and interceded and prayed for the children of men, and righteousness flowed before them as water, and mercy like dew upon the earth: thus it is they fare for ever and ever.[1]

Because these righteous ones are dwelling with God's angels there must be a distinction of some degree between them and the angels: so this is not a clear-cut reference to intercessory prayers by the latter. Instead, Enoch attempts to describe the glorious future awaiting the just men of earth. But whether or not these righteous ones whom he sees may legitimately be called angels, they are heavenly beings, abiding with the angels, and exercising the privilege of interceding for men.

A more certain allusion to angelic intercessors occurs in Enoch 40:6. The Seer, having been given a view of the heavenly glory, says "and the third voice I heard pray and intercede for those who dwell on the earth and supplicate in the name of the Lord of Spirits."[2] This Archangel's function is to make intercession on behalf of the earth's inhabitants. Yet only in Enoch 40:9 is this third voice given the name of "Gabriel." Whereas in the section 1-36 the four Archangels pray, the Similitudes assign to Gabriel alone the task and the honor. In Enoch 47:2, however, the confusion between the righteous ones and the angels reappears. Charles in this instance calls the prayers "the angels' intercession."[3] But the same terminology is employed as appears in 39:5:

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[1] Enoch 39:5.

[2] Enoch 40:6.

[3] Cf. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, "The Book of Enoch," note to 47:2., Vol. II., p. 215.

> And in those days shall have ascended the prayer of the righteous,
> And the blood of the righteous from the earth before the Lord of Spirits,
> In those days the holy ones who dwell above in the heavens
> Shall unite with one voice
> And supplicate and pray (and praise,
> And give thanks and bless the name of the Lord of Spirits)
> On behalf of the blood of the righteous which has been shed,
> And that the prayer of the righteous may not be in vain before the Lord of Spirits,
> That judgment may be done unto them,
> And that they may not have to suffer for ever.[1]

The righteous of earth first pray to the Lord of Spirits; then the holy ones who dwell in the heavens intercede so that the petitions may be heard. It cannot be definitely determined whether the intercessors are true angels or are just the souls of the deceased righteous men. But the author makes no distinctions between the two classes of heavenly beings. He says: "the holy ones who dwell above in the heavens shall unite with one voice."[2] Surely the angels may be listed as "holy ones that dwell above in the heavens" just as can the souls of the dead. The author of Enoch implies that all of the hosts of heaven pray; so whether they are called "angels" or not is hardly important. The angels and holy ones both intercede for men.

Not only Enoch 1-36 and 37-72 refer to the intercession of the angels, but the fifth section (91-104) twice points to a somewhat similar kind of supplication. At the heart of a series of woes pronounced on the ungodly, Enoch suggests that the righteous must pour out their prayers before the angels "that they may place the sin of the sinners for a memorial before the Most High."[3] Although this reference is not entirely lucid, its meaning is clarified by a similar verse: "I swear unto you, that in heaven the angels remember you for good before the glory of the

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[1]Enoch 47:1f. [2]Enoch 47:1.

[3]Enoch 99:3.

Great One."[1] In neither of these sentences does the word "intercession" appear, nor, indeed, is there any outright suggestion that the angels offer a prayer of any kind. They are to hear the supplications of the righteous and are then to bring the sins of the godless before the Most High, so that He may punish the wicked and hear the prayer of the godly.[2] Such action on the part of the angels is not actually intercessory prayer but is a form of mediation. The angels operate as "go-betweens," helping God to hear the prayers of deserving men and to punish sinners. It is promised in 104:1 that the angels will, without fail, remember the righteous before the Lord. But nowhere is it suggested that they will offer intercessory prayer. God will be propitiated by direct mediation rather than by supplication. The angels will appear before Him and, in addition to relaying petitions to Him, will represent the righteous Israelites in His presence.

Departing even more radically from the idea of strict intercessory prayer is the following section from the Testament of Levi:

> In the heaven next to it are the archangels who minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of ignorance of the righteous; offering to the Lord a sweet-smelling savour, a reasonable and a bloodless offering.[3]

A sacrificial service in heaven is implied. Prayer may of course be uttered as an element in such an observance, but the emphasis rests upon the act of sacrifice. Again it is the Archangels who administer the propitiation, and it is the sins of the righteous, rather than of the

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[1]Enoch 104:1.

[2]Enoch 99:3.

[3]Testament of Levi. 3:5f.

ungodly, that are concerned. But it is to be an "offering" not a supplication. Elsewhere in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs there are references to interceding angels who propitiate not so much by prayer as by sacrificial acts or by representing the people directly while standing in the presence of God. In response to Levi's question, his angelic guide informs him: "I am the angel who intercedeth for the nation of Israel that they may not be smitten utterly, for every evil spirit attacketh it."[1] The word "prayer" again does not appear, nor are we led particularly to believe that the task of this angel is to supplicate for Israel. He acts as protector by directly appearing before God and appeasing His wrath. Furtnermore, Dan, speaking to his children, says: "Draw near unto God and unto the angel that intercedeth for you, for he is a mediator between God and man...."[2] When we contrast such a verse to many of those in Enoch which record actual intercessory supplications and consider prayer and intercession to be partners,[3] one may conclude that not prayer, but some more direct form of mediation, is implied by these references in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Hence, although mediation of the angelic beings usually suggests intercessory prayer, such is not invariably the case. Now and again some more direct form of "standing in the presence" of God is implied. Interposed between God's wrath and the destruction of Israel, these angelic mediators are not so much supplicants as they are the eyes and ears of God.

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[1]The Testament of Levi 5:6.

[2]The Testament of Dan 6:2.

[3]Cf. Enoch 40:6.

The Book of Tobit suggests that Raphael, one of the seven angels, brings the remembrance of Sarah's and Tobit's prayers to God. "So now, when you and your daughter-in-law Sarah prayed, I brought the remembrance of your prayer before the Holy One."[1] Again, Raphael, when offering his great apologia, says: "For I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, who offer up the prayers of God's people and go into the presence of the glory of the Holy One."[2] No more lucid statement could be desired. Raphael is an intercessor, not because he prays in behalf of Israel, but because he hears Israel's supplication and brings them before God, thus becoming Israel's representative in the Court of the Lord.

Although intercessory prayers are not exclusively a product of the intertestamental period, having probably been known in the literature of the Old Testament, they are an important type of supplication. If the Book of Tobit and Enoch 1-36 are two of the earliest, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs one of the latest, of our writings, intercession was a feature of Jewish prayer life which persisted throughout the intertestamental period. Righteous Jews may intercede on behalf of others, while angels may pray for living men. But angelic intercession, as we have seen, does not always imply prayer. The righteous upon earth having prayed to God, the angels may either pray to Him on their behalf or mediate by representing the righteous men's cause directly before God. Yet the angels bring human desires and needs before the Lord only after men have prayed.

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[1]The Book of Tobit 12:12. [2]The Book of Tobit 12:15.

Of lesser interest, but nevertheless important, are the several prayers of repentance which occur in this literature. Nearly two hundred and fifty years intervene between I Esdras and I Baruch; yet in each of these writings there are prayers of penitence and humiliation. Appearing as the sole long supplication in I Esdras, the first of these prayers, uttered by Ezra when he is informed that the men of Israel have not put away their foreign wives as commanded, is extremely interesting. When Ezra hears that the Jews still live with their Gentile partners, he rends his clothes, plucks his beard, and prays. It is one man praying for the sins of a nation. To that extent, such a supplication may well be called an intercession. Yet it is far more than that. It opens with the words: "Lord, I am ashamed, I am abashed before you. For from the times of our forefathers, our sins have risen higher than our heads and our mistakes have mounted up to heaven, and we have been involved in grievous sin, even to this day."[1] Ezra prays not only for Israel in general, but also for himself, continually employing the words "our" and "we." The closing phrases of the prayer likewise express a desire for forgiveness and an inward attitude of repentance: "Now here we are before you, in all our iniquity, for in view of it we cannot any longer stand before you."[2] Recognizing his own and his people's sins, Ezra comes to God with a desire to repent and centers his supplication around that desire. So in a sense his was a prayer of both confession and repentance, which are manifestly related.

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[1] I Esdras 8:74.

[2] I Esdras 8:90.

Vastly different is the single prayer of penitence which occurs in Enoch. The Mighty Ones and the Kings will, on the last day, repent of their sins and confess them to God.

> And they will bless and glorify the Lord of Spirits, and say: 'Blessed is the Lord of Spirits, the Lord of Kings, the Lord of the mighty and the Lord of the rulers, the Lord of glory and the Lord of wisdom, (before whom) every secret is clear. And Thy power is from generation to generation and Thy glory for ever and ever: deep are all Thy secrets and innumerable, and Thy righteousness is beyond reckoning. We have now learnt that we should glorify and bless the king of kings and Him who is king over all kings.'[1]

Thus the wicked, on the day of judgment, will confess their sin by praying to God. It will be seen, however, that the element of praise is more prominent than any expression of repentance. The context into which the prayer is set implies that these mighty ones and kings will desire to confess their shortcomings, but the prayer itself has little that suggests a penitent attitude except the final sentence. The Jews had learned that they should glorify the Lord, and they were doing so.

Similarly, the Apocalypse of Baruch proposes prayer as the means for reconciliation of the sinner to God. "And at all times make request perseveringly and pray diligently with your whole heart that the Mighty One may be reconciled to you, and that He may not reckon the multitude of your sins, but remember the rectitude of your fathers."[2] Whereas praise is the essential element in the section of Enoch just studied, the desire for redemption and forgiveness of sins is central to this sentence in the Apocalypse of Baruch. But here, just as in the other, repentance and confession are implied. The words "that He may not

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[1]Enoch 63:2ff.

[2]The Apocalypse of Baruch 84:10.

reckon the multitude of your sins," indicate that the supplicant knows his transgressions, is truly repentant, and seeks forgiveness.

In addition to the prayers of petition, intercession, and repentance, there are several less customary types of supplication. As we have implied, prayers for the dead appear in the literature with which we have been occupied and in the contemporary liturgies. Less frequently to be discovered are prayers uttered by the souls of the dead to the Most High. In partial answer to a question by Ezra concerning the state of the soul after death, the "Sovereign" says:

> For about death, the teaching is: When the final sentence goes forth from the Most High that a man is to die, when the soul departs from the body to return again to him who gave it, first of all it prays to the glory of the Most High....[1]

Although Goodspeed in his version substitutes another phrase for the word "prays," omitting entirely any suggestion that the departing soul invokes God, the implications of the traditional translation are important. While no actual prayers of the souls of the recently-dead are listed in the literature, this reference suggests that, at least in later times, the soul was thought to pray to God. Such a doctrine is consistent with the belief apparent in Enoch that the souls of the righteous function as intercessors. Here, however, is the expression of the belief that the souls, immediately after death, can and do pray to God on their own behalf. A somewhat similar suggestion is found in the Book of Baruch. The Exiles, believing that they are receiving punishment for the sins of their fathers, say: "O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, hear the prayer of the dead in Israel, and of the sons of those who sinned in your sight...."[2]

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[1] IV Ezra 7:78.

[2] The Book of Baruch 3:4.

Since it is inconceivable that any deceased man could pray if complete extinction followed immediately upon death, it is the souls of the dead that utter the prayer. Having not been destroyed at death, the soul prays to God; such a supplication is closely related to the intercession of the righteous, especially as described in Enoch.

A final type of prayer is that which, under two different forms, appears in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, one in Gad and the other in Joseph. The former patriarch represents prayer as a bulwark against covetousness. He says: "If a man prospers more than you, do not be vexed, but pray also for him, that he may have perfect prosperity."[1] According to Walker, Gad thinks of prayer "as an insurance of the mind against covetousness."[2] But Gad suggests more than that. A man should pray for the one who is a potential enemy and a rival. Although the normal reaction of man is to resent the successes of others, prayer is an excellent counterbalance. The meaning of Gad's statement is clarified by an admonition of Joseph: "If anyone seeks to do evil unto you, do well unto him, and pray for him."[3] Besides closely resembling some of the ethical teachings of Jesus, this verse casts light upon one of the noblest concepts of prayer. Here, more decidedly than elsewhere in the intertestamental literature, prayer becomes an inward spiritual experience. Its purpose is not to produce a miracle nor to ask forgiveness, but to protect the soul against hatred and covetousness. Likewise exalted is the passage in Ben Sirach which suggests that one's own sins will be forgiven if he first forgives the wrong-doing of his neighbor. "Forgive

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[1]The Testament of Gad 7:1. [2]Walker, op.cit., p. 19.

[3]The Testament of Joseph 18:2.

your neighbor his wrongdoing; then your sins will be forgiven when you pray."[1] These words resemble Jesus' teachings in the Lord's Prayer. The relation between prayer and religious living is close, therefore. But actually, the passages in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs refer to even less self-centered supplications than does this one in Ben Sirach, for the latter at least suggests that a man ought to be concerned over the forgiveness of his own sins. In the Testaments, on the other hand, the supplications tend to be more objective.

Intercession and petition were frequnet in Old Testament times, just as were prayers for Wisdom and victory. But supplications whose purpose is to put the soul right with God and man are uncommon anywhere outside the New Testament. To observe them here in two spots in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is heartening. Although the words of none of these prayers are given, the fact that the writer of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs refers to supplications of this sort is rare, indicating that some Jews, at least, believed prayer to be essentially a matter of the heart, directed toward God, not as a request, but as a soul-searching experience. Hence, as the apex in the development of Jewish prayer-life stand these two references to supplications in behalf of enemies and rivals.

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[1] Ben Sirach 28:2.

THE THEOLOGY OF PRAYER

Rarely did Hebrew thinking adhere to logical formulae. To speak of the "thology of prayer" is, therefore, in itself to involve inaccuracies. Certain observable principles and tendencies underlie Jewish prayer-life, however. Wide diversity of authorship and date of composition renders it impossible to discover many consistent lines of thought pervading the numerous supplications of the intertestamental literature. Yet by attempting to place these prayers in certain arbitrary theological moulds, the religious life of the Jews of our period can be illumined. Therefore, at least four inquiries may be made concerning the several types of supplication: (1) To what extent are they thought to be efficacious? (2) In what practical manner does God respond to them? (3) What is man's part in facilitating an answer to them, and what is God's? (4) What is the relation between them and ritualistic observances?

The most cursory study of intertestamental literature elicits two conclusions: (1) the Jews had profound faith in the practical effectiveness of prayer, but (2) neither the outward expression nor the inward experiencing of such faith is ever considered a prerequisite to receiving a divine answer to a petition. The New Testament suggestion that prayer is most effective when accompanied by implicit faith in its outcome is never made in intertestamental literature. Faith in the results of prayer there surely is, and strong faith, but appeal to such faith or specific suggestions that a man must believe before his petition could be answered are absent.

The author of the Book of Baruch expresses great assurance in prayer's outcome:

> Have courage, my children, and cry to God,
> And He will save you from subjection, from the hands
> of your enemies....[1]

or again:

> Have courage, my children, and cry out to God,
> For you will be remembered by Him who brought this
> upon you.[2]

Thus, whether it is Judas Maccabeus seeking victory over Nicanor or Ezra asking for wisdom, there is implicit faith that God will respond. Yet, although both First and Second Maccabees represent Judas as praying frequently and as displaying the assurance and trust that God unfailingly fights for Israel, they nowhere portray him as suggesting that the prayers of his followers will more certainly elicit a divine response if they, these followers themselves, have trust in such an outcome. When Judas and his men come upon the camp of Gorgias, the former, recalling that God has preserved Israel's forefathers, admonishes his men to be courageous and calls upon them to pray fervently.[3] Then, Judas concludes his remarks with a great statement which affirms his faith that God will readily respond to their plea, but nowhere does he imply that the prayer will more certainly be answered if the men either express or feel such a faith. Likewise, when Judas receives the alarming news that Israel is to be attacked by Antiochus, he orders the people to "call on the Lord all day and all night."[4] Here is another

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[1]The Book of Baruch 4:21.

[2]The Book of Baruch 4:27.

[3]I Maccabees 4:9-11.

[4]II Maccabees 13:10.

opportunity for Judas to have urged his people to pray with faith in the outcome. Instead of ordering them to supplicate at such lengths, he might well have suggested that they pray briefly and put trust in the outcome of their entreaty so that the enemy might be defeated. But the fact that he does not do so is significant. Though having great faith in the outcome of prayer, he does not deem such faith to be the necessary precondition of a petition. About a few of the intertestamental prayers is it said that they were offered in faith, but only about a few. In at least one instance the angel Ramiel insists that he had appeared before Baruch as a direct response to the latter's prayer: "Because thou hast besought the Most High to reveal to thee the interpretation of the vision which thou hast seen, I have been sent...."[1] Again faith is not named as a requisite to the answering of prayer. It is naturally assumed that if a man prays earnestly his prayer is deserving of a response. Further, it is undoubtedly believed that the mere utterance of a prayer implies faith in some kind of answer. Therefor , the intertestamental Jews had extreme faith in the outcome of their supplications, but they never considered the expression of that faith essential to the receipt of a divine response.

But if faith is not a condition of prayer, righteousness is. In some of the writings it is an open question whether or not the prayer of the sinner is ever answered, while in others it is positively affirmed that only the supplication of the righteous shall be heard. Considered chronologically, the earliest intertestamental writing to maintain that God hears the petitions of the righteous more readily than those of the

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 56:1.

sinner is the first section of Enoch (1-36), where the prayers of the fallen Watchers are said to be of no avail to themselves nor to anyone else. These angels had become so sinful that God would under no conditions respond to their entreaties. Of these Watchers it is said: "...the murder of their beloved ones they shall see, and over the destruction of their children they will lament, and will make supplication unto eternity, but mercy and peace will they not attain."[1] Not only would petitions, even though uttered with eternal persistence, be unavailing, but intercessory prayers, offered on behalf of loved-ones, would go unanswered. When the Watchers are told that they will see the destruction of their sons, it is added: "Your petition on their behalf will not be granted, nor that on your own: likewise, despite your tears and prayers you will receive nothing whatever contained in the writing which I have written."[2] But still more:--so great is the wickedness of the Watchers that they will be prevented even from praying. "For from thenceforward they could not speak (with Him) nor lift up their eyes to heaven for shame of their sins for which they were punished."[3] Thus, unrighteousness might cause God not only to become indifferent to the most urgent prayers--such as for the preservation of sons from eternal punishment or for the forgiveness of personal sins--but to fill the rebel with such shame and consternation that he could not utter petitions. Enoch 101:3 amplifies that suggestion: "And when He sends His anger upon you because of all your deeds, ye cannot petition Him; for ye have

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[1] Enoch 12:6.

[2] Enoch 14:7.

[3] Enoch 13:5.

spoken proud and insolent words against His righteousness: therefore ye will have no peace." Although it is not clear what the author here implies, one of two interpretations of the verse seems possible: (1) divine intervention on that great Day will render it impossible for the wicked even to utter a petition; (2) or the unrighteous one will be permitted to pray but his words will fall upon deaf ears. Whichever of these may be the correct interpretation, Enoch suggests that when God punishes the wicked, recourse to prayer will not be effective.

A similar thesis is presented in the Apocalypse of Baruch, but whereas in Enoch 1-36 only the negative aspect is maintained, i.e., that God will not hear the prayer of the sinner, in this apocalypse it is stated affirmatively that God hears the prayer of the righteous. Hezekiah, after hearing that the King of Assyria was planning to seize and destroy Israel, "trusted in his works and had hope in his righteousness"[1] and prayed to God. After quoting the King's prayer, the writer of the apocalypse comments: "And the Mighty One heard him, for Hezekiah was wise, and He had respect unto his prayer, because he was righteous."[2] A more direct affirmation of the principle could not be desired. Hezekiah's prayer was heard because he was wise and was righteous; hence both wisdom and righteousness substitute for faith as basic conditions for divine response to a supplication. Subsequently, referring to the intercessory prayers of the prophets and just men of the past, Baruch says: "...and they prayed for us to Him who made us, because they trusted in their works, and the Mighty One heard their prayer and

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 63:3.

[2]Cf. The Apocalypse of Baruch 63:3-6.

was gracious...."[1] In this apocalypse, however, such an emphasis upon "works" and righteousness is not surprising, for throughout the book Baruch stresses the importance of good living and obedience to God, insisting, in fact, upon salvation through works. Thus it is in accord with his general thesis for the writer of the apocalypse to show that God unmistakably heeds the supplication of the just and upright man. R. H. Charles has summarized the author's theory of the relation of prayer to "works:"

> In the consciousness of their justification by the law (li.3) they (the righteous men) can with confidence approach God and look to Him for the fulfillment of their prayers because of their works wherein they trust (lxiii. 3,5; lxxxv. 2)....[2]

In another apocalypse almost contemporary with that of Baruch appears--somewhat less prominently--a similar emphasis. In IV Ezra the following passage occurs: "I prayed unto the Most High, and said, Thou hast shewed thy servant these wonders from the beginning and hast counted me worthy that thou shouldest receive my prayer."[3] Although the meaning of the words is not certain, Goodspeed clarifies it with his translation of the last phrase: "...have thought me worthy to have my prayer heard by you." Several conclusions may be drawn from such a statement, but offoremost importance is the assertion that if a man is worthy, God hears his prayer. Likewise, if the Syriac version of this passage is truly accurate, it follows that when God answers a prayer despite man's apparent wickedness, He thereby demonstrates His conviction that

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 85:2.

[2]R. H. Charles, The Apocalypse of Baruch (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896) p. lxxxi.

[3]IV Ezra 13:14.

such a man is worthy of receiving the divine response. Hence, when a man's prayer is heard, it is at least one indication that he is worthy, or that God has considered him to be. A more positive statement of this conclusion is made in the Wisdom of Solomon, where Aaron is represented as having by prayer successfully conbatted the plague which had beset Israel in the wilderness. The author of Wisdom concludes his description of the episode with the words: "He withstood that wrath and put an end to the disaster, showing that he was a servant of yours (God's)."[1] The fact that the prayer is answered proves Aaron to be a servant of the Lord. Although in the reference from IV Ezra the word "worthy" is employed while "servant" appears here, the implications are the same. Because God hears the supplication of the worthy and the upright and the true servant, any answer to a petition is a demonstration that He has called the supplicant a servant or a worthy one. Furthermore, a man in doubt about his own status as a servant might conceivably determine his position by observing God's response to his prayers. If the prayer were answered, it would be an indication that he was worthy. Whether or not such a practical application of the ideas implied in these verses was ever made, a man was called righteous if his prayers were heard. Nevertheless, these passages in Wisdom and IV Ezra may point to a conclusion directly contrary to the proposition that only the prayers of the righteous are heard; i.e., that God exercises His grace in responding to supplications. Goodspeed's translation of the verse from IV Ezra proceeds as follows: "You have shown

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[1]The Wisdom of Solomon 18:21.

your slave these wonders from the beginning, and have thought me worthy to have my prayer heard by you."[1] Although Ezra calls himself a "slave," thus implying that he is already loyal to God and thus "righteous," he also suggests that it is the Lord who has, of His own grace, unfolded the secrets of the ages and answered his prayer for enlightenment. The Seer does not assert that he is in any way worthy, but recognizes that God "thought" him to be. Furthermore, the term "worthy" is nowhere defined, and although it usually is considered synonymous with righteous, it might logically refer to a legal relationship existing between the Seer and his God. The Lord first chooses him as a medium for the divine revelation, and then answers the prayer in accord with that original purpose. The passage in the Wisdom of Solomon affords a related interpretation. Although one may not appear to be a servant of God, according to earthly standards, the Lord may choose him to be a follower and demonstrate that election by producing some miracle in response to his prayer. Even in his own estimation, Aaron may not have thought of himself as a servant, but God demonstrates him to be. Hence, it is not the patriarch's own good "works" but the grace of God that elicits the divine response to the prayer. In III Maccabees the most clear-cut statement of God's grace in answering prayer appears: "And loving the house of Israel, Thou didst promise that if there should be a falling away...and we should...make our supplication, Thou wouldest hear our prayer."[2] God, loving Israel, has chosen her for His own and has promised that, though she sin, He will hear her prayer.

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[1] IV Ezra 13:14.

[2] III Maccabees 2:10.

Nor is it implied that the Jews must first repent. God will respond to their wishes because of His love. Walker, commenting upon these words, suggests that the sinner was expected to approach God directly on his own behalf.[1] Therefore, in spite of his wickedness and transgression, the sinner might approach God directly and, through the divine grace, receive an answer to his petition, whether it be a request for military victory, wisdom, prosperity, or the forgiveness of sins.

Moreover, in the Prayer of Manasseh appear these words: "The sins I have sinned are more in number than the sands of the sea....Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me."[2] There is no external evidence that God actually responded, but to any such prayer of repentance there could be no clear demonstration that He had heard. God may forgive a sinner without revealing the act to anyone. Yet the fact that Manasseh could utter such a prayer, whether it were answered or not, is an excellent indication that the Jew had faith in God's response to the prayer of the wicked if he were sincere and truly penitent. Yet, in the reference to III Maccabees 2:10, there is more specific concern over the actual answer of the prayer. God had promised that even though Israel had sinned, He would hear her supplication.

The Similitudes of Enoch present still another aspect of the problem by examining the prayers of the wicked on the Day of Judgment. The unrighteous will by then have proceeded so far in his iniquity that even prayers of repentance will be denied him. Not only will he have no time to pray on that day, but whatever agonizing petitions he may utter

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[1]Cf. Thomas Walker, op. cit., p. 7.

[2]The Prayer of Manasseh 8:13.

will be futile. Although the Similitudes are not as concerned about the efficacy of prayer as about the salvation of the just and the judgment of the wicked, they deliberately suggest that the supplications of the righteous will be heard even on the Day of the Lord. At the scene of the great assize there will be loud rejoicing because "...the prayer of the righteous(is) heard, and the blood of the righteous required before the Lord of Spirits."[1] In fact, Enoch beholds that the angelic hosts are offering intercession so that the prayers of the righteous may of a certainty be answered:

> In those days will the holy ones who dwell above in the heavens unite with one voice and supplicate and intercede and laud and give thanks and bless the name of the Lord of Spirits on account of the blood of the righteous which has been shed, and the prayer of the righteous that it may not be in vain before the Lord of Spirits....[2]

Indeed, the Jew's hope for the Day of Judgment was that it should be an occasion for the vindication of the righteous and the answer of their supplications.

But in direct contrast is the belief that on this Day the petitions of the wicked will be in vain. The mighty, the exalted, and the rulers will fall down before the Lord and will "petition Him and supplicate for mercy at His hands."[3] Yet God will show no mercy, bringing these mighty ones to shame instead. The section in Enoch 62:9ff closes with these words: "And the angels of punishment will take them in charge to execute vengeance on them because they have oppressed His children and His elect." Thus the Similitudes recognize that the time

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[1] Enoch 47:4.

[2] Enoch 47:1f.

[3] Enoch 62:9.

will come when repentance of the wicked will be unavailing. Though these should supplicate with sincerity, and perhaps even with faith, their uttering will be but vanity. It is not only that God will be deaf to their plea, but the angels of punishment will not even allow them time to pray. The mighty ones and the kings will implore the angels of punishment to grant them some respite to repent before the Lord of Spirits but in vain. Although in this regard Enoch 63:1-9 is somewhat confusing, making it appear on one hand that the wicked are given time to supplicate and on the other that their prayer is a lament because no such respite has been granted, it is clear that after these mighty ones have confessed, they discover it to be too late. These verses lead Charles to conclude that "there is no place of repentance when the final judgment has come."[1]

On one hand contradicting and on the other hand supplementing these suggestions of Enoch are certain passages in The Apocalypse of Baruch and IV Ezra, both of which consider many of the same themes that are prominent in the Similitudes. Although in general agreement with Enoch's contention that the wicked will not be permitted even to pray on the Day of Judgment, they revise his theories about the prayers of the righteous. In the beautiful Apocalypse of Baruch are these words:

> For lo, when the Most High will bring to pass all these things, there will not be there again an opportunity of returning (or repentance), nor a limit to the times...nor change of ways, nor place for prayer, nor sending of petitions, nor receiving knowledge, nor giving of love, nor place of repentance, nor

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[1]R. H. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1893), p. 167.

> supplication for offenses, nor intercession of the fathers, nor prayer of the prophets, nor help of the righteous.[1]

No more elaborate statement of the status of prayer on the day of the great assize could be desired. Petition, supplication, intercession, and repentance will all be impossible. Not only the prayers of the wicked, but even those of the prophets and the righteous will be in vain. No intercession nor repentance, regardless of by whom uttered, will in any manner alter one's standing before his Maker when once the curtains have been drawn and history and time are ended. Similarly, but not so inclusively, IV Ezra insists that there will be at that time no intercession. Having asked whether the just will be permitted to intercede for the wicked, Ezra is told that "never shall anyone pray for another in that day."[2] Therefore, whether a man be righteous or wicked, neither his prayers for himself nor those for anyone else, even though that other person be a kinsman, will be permitted. Such teachings are undoubtedly consistent with the Jewish faith in the final judgment. No one shall, at the last moment, repent and be forgiven for sins that deserve punishment, but to assert that the prayers of neither the just nor the wicked will be valid on that day is to contradict the belief that the prayers of the righteous man are heard at all times and without reserve. In summary, then, Enoch contends that on the Day of Judgment the prayers of the righteous are to be answered, while those of the wicked are to be rejected. The Apocalypse of Baruch holds that no prayers will be effective regardless of the worthiness of the supplicant

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 85:12.

[2]IV Ezra 7:105.

while IV Ezra implies that all the prayers of the righteous may be heard, so long as they are not intercessory. Actually the latter writing says little about the supplications of the wicked nor the personal petitions of the righteous, but he does insist that on the final day no intercessory prayers will be heard.

Between these doctrines of grace and works there is an obvious inconsistency, but some of the disagreement may be explained. First, a host of authors, writing in diverse environments and eras have composed this literature. Therefore, because the individual Jew never prizes logical coherence in his religious beliefs and because a variety of authors implies a diversity of opinions, incongruities can be expected. Second, all penitential prayers of which this literature has many, assume that God will not turn a deaf ear to them; hence, He is expected to hear the supplication of the sinner. Third, the apocalyptic literature in the Book of Enoch refers specifically to "last times." Under such extraordinary conditions, the logic of the eschatological hope demanded that prayers of repentance be ignored. If the unrighteous were permitted at the last moment to repent and be saved, there could be no punishment for sin. So the wicked man's prayer on the day of the great assize must logically go unanswered. Fourth, although the prayer of the wicked might under certain untoward circumstances go unanswered, in most cases the sinner, if he is honestly penitent, will be heard. The wicked do not, through their own efforts, make themselves worthy of such a divine response, but God, in His love, responds to the fervent entreaty. Conceivably a man may become so wicked that no just God will hear his petitions nor his intercessions on

behalf of his fellows; but in the Prayer of Manasseh and III Maccabees it is affirmed that any one, regardless of his worthiness, can approach God and plead his case. The Lord more readily responds to the appeal of the righteous, except on the Day of Judgment, but is also available to the penitent sinner.

Nevertheless, God answers many prayers without reference either to the righteousness of the supplicant nor to His own divine grace. When, according to Jewish historians, any of the Maccabean brothers ask for revenge or victory, the Lord responds not necessarily because they are righteous men, but because He has a pervasive interest in the welfare of Israel. By the standards of their day these are righteous men, but other considerations than their worthiness elicit God's intervention in their affairs. The authors of I and II Maccabees believed that the chief purpose of God was the success of Israel against all foes, and that, regardless of the righteousness of the leaders, this purpose would be fulfilled. Likewise, Susanna's supplication for divine protection is answered without reference to her worthiness.[1] Indeed, the aim of the tale is to demonstrate her innocence; hence the absence of any suggestion that God responds to her entreaty because of her righteousness is surprising. Many of Ezra's petitions are answered apart from any consideration of his worthiness to receive such a response. Although he is described as a just Seer in IV Ezra, the angel Uriel, appearing before him in response to his prayer, says nothing about being despatched by God specifically because Ezra is righteous.[2] Therefore, in IV Ezra, which places considerable stress upon

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[1] The Story of Susanna 42f.

[2] Cf. IV Ezra 4:1f; 5:31; 7:1; 8:37; etc.

the Law, it is astounding to discover that the Seer's petitions are heard without mention of his obedience to the Law or of his righteousness. Therefore, Jewish thought at this point was extremely confused. Typical of Judaism was the doctrine that the prayers of the righteous man were more effective than those of the wicked. But throughout our period there are at least two other themes: i.e., that God, by his grace, hears the supplication of the sinner, and that He may respond to some prayers without any apparent consideration of the worth of the supplicant.

Although there are in these writings no clear-cut teachings concerning the relation between righteousness and petition, upon one thing the Jews were agreed: i.e., that when they besought the Lord, something concrete and objective occurred. God would not only receive their prayer, but He would respond with some overt, practical act. Prayers of penitence perhaps rarely call for the appearance of any objective answer, but the majority of other petitions imply that God is persuaded to do more than merely give the plea a hearing. When the intertestamental Jew prayed, he expected God to reply openly and in the proper manner. When Solomon sought Wisdom, he expected it to be imparted, and when Judith cried for vengeance, she believed that the enemy would be destroyed. From such faith two vital questions spring, both having to do with methods: (1) What is God's part in answering prayer, and what is man's? Must Israel aid the Lord, fighting jointly with Him for the desired victory or deliverance? Can God, unaided, overcome the foe by the might of His supernatural arm? Hence, to phrase the question succinctly, does God require man's assistance in fulfilling the requests made in prayer? (2) Are prayers answered by the direct act of God? by angels? by

supernatural miracles? In other words, through what medium, if any, does God operate when meeting human petitions? Now, it will be apparent that these queries are closely related; yet neither can be properly understood apart from the other.

When Judith and Tobit pray, divine overt activities occur, while in IV Ezra enlightenment comes as direct response to the Seer's petition for it. But in the historical, "active" books of the Maccabees, God acts openly. In I Maccabees, as we shall discover, divine responses to supplication only rarely assume a miraculous character. Several of Judas' victories, coming as a result of prayer, are nothing short of astonishing in their magnitude, evidencing, thereby, divine intervention of some sort. But God's action is not manifest openly. Because He operates "through" the Maccabeans rather than "instead" of them, and because that activity is rarely accompanied by supernaturalism nor the miraculous, one must, if he wish to understand the relation between human and divine efforts in the answering of supplications, turn to more ambitious and exaggerated tales of God's direct intervention in history. I Maccabees undoubtedly gives a more accurate account of the divine support of Israel's cause, but other writings, which are less trustworthy historically, present more information upon the subject at hand. II Maccabees in one of our sources of illumination here, outlining the relation of prayer to human effort.

> Nicanor and his men advanced with trumpets and battle songs. And Judas and his men met the enemy with entreaties and prayers. So fighting with their hands and praying to God with their hearts, they laid low no less than thirty-five thousand, being

greatly cheered by God's manifest aid.[1]

Here is evidence that these particular Jews feel prayer to be insufficient alone; human action is also necessary. God has not done it all; He has instead "aided." The followers of Judas pray earnestly that a "good angel" may be sent to alarm the foe; yet they fight as though they do not expect any such supernatural being. It is important to note that no angel appears and yet that a smashing victory is recorded for the Israelites. What is the meaning, then, of the words: "being greatly cheered by God's manifest aid." Why is Israel cheered? God's intervention has quite probably been manifest in two ways: (1) the victory has been of considerable proportions; (2) the Jews have experienced almost supernatural strength in meeting their enemy. The account advises us that God has indeed manifested his aid by giving a great military triumph to Israel. But one may only suppose that the people are cheered by experiencing God's strength within. If so, the writer of II Maccabees has, in this instance at least, a sophisticated interpretation of the answer to prayer, believing that God did not in person battle for Israel and did not despatch some supernatural being, but aided her instead by filling her with courage and strength. Both God and Israel struggled for victory, but only the action of the latter was overt. In two ways this passage suggests that human effort is a supplement to prayer: (1) the Israelites fought and prayed at the same time; (2) God sent no angel to do the battling, but instead he cheered Israel and gave her courage so that she, herself, actually did the fighting.

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[1] II Maccabees 15:27f.

Again, in the Book of Judith, practical action is emphasized. Here, however, rather than prayer and deed being simultaneous, the human activities are first engaged in; then the people supplicate. Our concern is not at all with the answer to a petition, but with the importance placed upon human effort even before prayer was uttered. When Israel discovers what Holofernes, the General of Assyria, has done to neighboring communities and what he openly threatens to do to them, they become alarmed and turn to the high priest, Joakim, for protection. At the outset he urges the inhabitants of Bethulia and Betomesthaim to seize the mountain passes, because through them Judea can be entered. Only after such precautions do the people engage in prayer.[1] Again the high priest of Israel has preserved the essential balance between human effort and prayer. God may respond to the prayer for victory, but that is not enough. Man must do something to aid Him; so even before they formally petition Him, they take the necessary precautions against the adversary. Hence, although the Jews felt prayer's efficacy to be a demonstrable fact, and trusted that God will always respond to the supplication of the righteous with the appropriate activity, they were nevertheless sufficiently practical to take any precautions or engage in any activity that would facilitate the production of the desired results.

To the question concerning the divine techniques employed in effecting an answer to prayer, there can be no single reply. At least three possible methods appear prominently: (1) God might, by producing a divine miracle, act directly and overtly without a mediator; (2) He

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[1]The Book of Judith Ch. 4.

might commission angels to do His bidding: (3) He might instill additional courage and renewed strength into the supplicant, thus enabling him partially to answer his own prayer. The author of II Maccabees declares that a prayer for military victory is answered by the hand of God, not by military arms. Judas Maccabeus, so the account records, "stretched out his hands to heaven and called upon the Lord who works wonders, for he knew that victory is not decided by weapons but won by the Lord for such as He judges to deserve it."[1] God, far more than a mere "aid" according to this passage, wins the battle Himself. As Goodspeed translates the verse: "he gains the victory for those who deserve it." The exact methods which He employs are not outlined. Yet II Maccabees implies that because He "works wonders," God acts miraculously--perhaps directly, perhaps through a mediator. Therefore, the arm of the Lord is more to be trusted than the arms of men. Whatever the manner of the divine intervention, it is a most real experience. In one noteworthy instance II Maccabees suggests that the divine intervention may be extremely miraculous. Although the account nowhere specifically affirms that the action comes in response to prayer, the fact that the elaborate supplications precede the phenomenon implies that the entreaties of the priest and the populace have elicited the divine act. The story is familiar. Heliodorus attempts to enter the Sanctuary, only to be prevented from doing so by the mysterious rider and the two young men who flog him unmercifully.[2] As an explanation of the episode, II Maccabees says:

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[1] II Maccabees 15:21f.

[2] II Maccabees 3:13-34.

> But no sooner had he and his guards arrived before the treasury than the Sovereign of Spirits and of all authority caused a great manifestation so that all who had been daring enough to come with him were apalled at the power of God and fainted with terror.[1]

In that instance the intervention had been miraculous. But elsewhere in II Maccabees His actions are less obvious. Before Judas and his men attack the forts of Idumea, they petition for victory and receive it, but no miracle appompanies the conquest. Instead, "attacking them vigorously they made themselves masters of the positions."[2] There is nothing supernatural about the Lord's response to their supplication. Therefore, both the miraculous phenomena and the more subtle "divine aid" are described in II Maccabees.

III Maccabees, recording a similar event, implies a divine intervention which includes both a direct act on the part of God and a supernatural miracle. The phenomenon comes in response to the prayer of Simon II, who requests God to prevent Ptolemy from entering the holy-of-holies.

> Then the God who beholds all, the Father of all holy among the holy ones, hearing the supplication spoken according to the law, scourged him who was greatly uplifted in violence and insolence, shaking him to and fro as a reed by the wind, so that lying on the ground powerless and paralyzed in body he could not so much as speak, being smitten by a righteous judgment.[3]

No angel nor other intermediary here does the bidding of the Lord, but He, with His own hand, scourges and beats the naughty Ptolemy. Obviously we are here considering an event whose authenticity may be

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[1] II Maccabees 3:24.

[2] II Maccabees 10:17.

[3] III Maccabees 2:21f.

questioned. Just what transpired in the Temple it is not for us of the twentieth century to say, but it may be concluded that in the mind of the writer, God actually exerted His might against the foe. Not the arms of the Israelites, but the sword of the Lord, scourged and pummelled Ptolemy. To the fervent prayer of the priest, therefore, came an answer, both supernatural and directly effected by God.

But more frequent than the direct intervention of God in response to prayer is the miraculous activity of angelic intermediaries who execute His will. Again it is in II Maccabees that the most clear-cut expose of such a phenomenon develops. The followers of Judas pray for the Lord to become an enemy of their foes and then in the thick of the battle which follows:

> there appeared to the enemy from heaven five splendid figures on horses with gold bridles, leading the Jews, and they surrounded Maccabeus and protected him with their armor and kept him unhurt, while they shot arrows and thunderbolts at the enemy, so that, confused and blinded, they were thrown into disorder and cut to pieces. Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered, and six hundred horsemen.[1]

Whereas in response to Simon's prayer God personally appears to smite the intruder, in answer to Judas' petition He sends supernatural beings to protect the warriors and attack the enemy. Yet, these supernatural "figures" are visible only to the enemy. Furthermore, after the battle, when Timotheus has been defeated, the Jews thank God "who does great services to Israel and gives them victory" but they do not mention any supernatural occurrences. Why are not the Israelites themselves blinded by the thunder bolts and the splendor of the men, and why does their

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[1] II Maccabees 10:29ff.

prayer of thanksgiving omit all reference to a miraculous intervention? Perhaps one of the following replies is correct: (1) the author of II Maccabees may not have intended to say that "only" the enemy saw the resplendent men, but that Israel also beheld them; (2) in his haste to describe the miraculous scene, and in his anxiety to show the glorious intervention of the Lord, the author may have been careless with the details and may thus have omitted phrases important to a full understanding of the event; (3) inasmuch as the siege of Gazara and the defeat of Timotheus, both of which immediately followed upon the appearance of the strange "figures," were in no way supernatural, this particular episode is essentially fictitious, arising from various legendary sources and being, therefore, incomplete in detail. But, however tempting it may be to speculate upon peculiarities in the account, one thing may be said: the author was so concerned to affirm God's miraculous deeds in behalf of Israel that neither inconsistencies nor limited detail greatly troubled him. If the angels had protected Judas and hurled thunderbolts at the enemy, it is incredible that the Jews would not also have observed the fete. But for the author of II Maccabees that was not the issue. He desired to assert only one fact: God had despatched some supernatural beings to rescue Israel from the foe.

Turning to II Maccabees 11:6-12, one discovers a similar but more consistent description of divine intervention. Israel, wailing and weeping, prays for an angel, and a mysterious rider, clothed in white, appears at the head of the column to help defeat Lysias. This rider,

while hurling no thunderbolts and overtly protecting none of the warriors, is not concealed from Israel, nor is he said to be apparent only to the enemy. Further, it is not clearly stated, but only implied, that this rider comes as a direct and supernatural response to Israel's prayer. He is not called an angel, nor is it said that God has despatched him. In the absence of many of the details that might be desired, it may here, as above, be surmised that the chief concern of the author is not to resolve all twentieth century critical problems but to say with vigour and with enough mystery to be fascinating, that God has sent a powerful and splendid rider, worthy of His blessing and might, to defend Israel and to give her courage.

Both III Maccabees and the Apocalypse of Baruch contain undeniable references to the intervention not of supernatural men, but of angels. In the former, the priest Eleazar utters a lengthy prayer for succor against the mad Philopater and his trampling elephants, a petition answered in the following manner:

> Then the greatly glorious, almighty, and true God, making manifest his holy face, opened the gates of heaven, from which two glorious angels of terrible aspect descended, visible to all but the Jews, and withstood them and filled the army of the adversaries with confusion and terror, and bound them with immovable fetters.[1]

Then the beasts turned upon the heathen and crushed them rather than the Israelites. This is indeed a miraculous response to prayer, and although God does personally intervene (unless "making manifest his holy face" may be taken as a suggestion that He revealed Himself), two angelic figures are commissioned to do His bidding. Yet here, as in II Maccabees,

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[1] III Maccabees 6:16-21.

only the Israelites of all the host of men and women present do not behold the angels. From them the miraculous figures are hidden. It is not certain why the author should insist upon this point, but it may be that he merely follows the lead of II Maccabees (unless we assume, with Emmet, that III Maccabees may have been written before II Maccabees.) However, it is more feasible to interpret this account as another attempt to fit the traditional account into the actual historical facts. The Jews, while facing imminent destruction, behold the beasts suddenly scatter and the enemy forces fall into confusion. Subsequently, as the story of the episode becomes popular and is frequently retold, it is reported that the victory has come as the result of angelic interventions. The author, attempting to harmonize this tale with the historical account, explains the discrepancy by describing a miracle visible only to the enemy. But whether or not the Jews actually behold any supernatural figures, the author implicitly believed that angels were capable of executing God's will when He responded to prayer.

The Apocalypse of Baruch, describing the miraculous advent of the angel Ramiel, affirms that the latter has been sent to Baruch in answer to a prayer for understanding. "And when I was pondering on these things and the like, lo! the angel Ramiel who presides over true visions was sent to me...."[1] Having enlightened Baruch, the angel discloses that he has come in direct response to the petition. "Nevertheless, because thou hast besought the Most High to reveal to thee the interpretation of the vision which thou hast seen, I have been sent to say to

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 56:1.

thee...."[1] Ultimately, the reason for the angel's mission is specified: "For I have come to tell thee these things, because thy prayer has been heard with the Most High."[2] Not only, therefore, has God given ear to the supplication, but He has responded concretely by commissioning an angel to answer it. Moreover, contrary to the account in Maccabees, the angel is named and his functions described. Therefore, in addition to being concrete and effective, the divine responses to petition are intelligent and efficient. When Baruch besought the Lord for interpretation of the vision, He did not despatch whichever angel was most readily available; rather, He chose Ramiel, the particular angel who could most effectively and efficiently fulfill Baruch's desire. Only once, in fact, is there in the intertestamental literature, an indication that God's answer, although open and concrete, is not really in accord with the supplicant's wishes and not actually, therefore, an efficient response. Ezra, having experienced visions and perplexities, asks God not to look at the sins of the wicked, but the deeds of the righteous when judging Israel. The Lord must spare her, therefore.[3] But the divine answer is in a sense treacherous, for God promises to conform to the letter of the request, but actually He ignores the spirit of it. Oesterley summarizes the situation:

> In verses 26-36 the Seer had prayed that God would ignore the wicked and their doings and that He would turn His attention to the righteous only. This, the Almighty says, He will do; but, as the next verse shows, not in the sense intended by the Seer. God will, indeed, take no thought of the sinners, but, it is added, nor yet of their

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 53:1. [2]The Apocalypse of Baruch 71:3.

[3]IV Ezra 8:26-36.

> death, judgment, and destruction. That of course was not what the Seer had meant.[1]

Fortunately, that is an exceptional instance. Hence, when Baruch prays for knowledge and insight to interpret his vision, Ramiel "who presides over true visions" is sent. Moreover, the prayer is uttered under unique conditions, for God has both produced the vision and then ordered an angel to interpret it. Because an incomprehensible vision is of no pragmatic value, the answer to Baruch's prayer is essentially the fulfillment of a prior divine plan. Having determined to enlighten Baruch, God does so by giving him a vision, an act which, when the Seer is unable adequately to understand it and prays for assistance, obliges Him to respond if His plan is to be fully executed. Hence, the angelic response comes ostensibly as the direct result of Baruch's prayer, but ultimately, perhaps, as the fulfillment of God's desire to illumine the Seer. In some ways, therefore, the response to Baruch's prayer is less phenomenal than is that to Eleazar's. But in either case, an angel does the bidding of God.

The two methods of divine response to prayer which have been outlined above are manifestly and admittedly closely related. Whether God acts directly or commissions an intermediary to intervene for Him, the answers which He gives to the petitions of men are supernatural. It is not for the modern critic to discuss at length the historical accuracy nor the theological implication of such miraculous occurrences as are recorded. Many of the phenomena can perhaps be explained away by employing critical techniques; some of the prayers may be interpolations; indeed, many of the petitions, if answered at all by God, may

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[1] O. E. Oesterley, II Esdras, op. cit., 106.

actually have produced no supernatural phenomena whatsoever, the records of such events being either purely fictitious or at least partially so. Nevertheless, the writers whose works we have examined expect the most profound results from their petitions. God may personally flog a despot, or despatch an angel to bring Israel a victory, or send the angel of visions to interpret a perplexing revelation. The very fact that whether these stories are accurate or not, the intertestamental writers record and apparently believe them and attribute them to effective prayer, is ample indication that they have the profoundest faith in the results of human petition.

But not all of the divine responses to petition are tinted with this supernaturalism. When observing the mutually distinct roles of God and man in answering prayer, we saw that frequently God's reply is by no means "otherworldy." Again it is to the Books of the Maccabees that one must turn to investigate non-supernatural responses. In I Maccabees there is the account of Jonathan's prayer for victory. After he has rent his clothes, poured dirt upon his head, and prayed, the record says: "And he turned again unto them in battle, and put them to rout, and they fled."[1] Immediately thereupon, Jonathan's men, all but two of whom have previously deserted the cause, return to him. Because God is not even mentioned in this passage, it is in no way affirmed that He answered the petition. Yet a great victory has occurred. No direct indication of the strength of Jonathan's foe is given, but the opposing army is large enough to frighten the Jews so that all but two of them

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[1] I Maccabees 11:72-74.

desert. Yet, after the prayer, this host is speedily put to flight by Jonathan with the probable (though unmentioned) aid of the two captains. Surely such a major conquest is related to the prayer for victory. Yet there is no reference to the miraculous intervention of God or angels, nor is there an exact description of the process by which Jonathan routs the enemy. No angel with golden swords or dazzling thunderbolts comes to Israel's rescue this time. Jonathan and his men effect the victory with their own strength. Three possibilities present themselves as interpretations of such an episode: (1) prayer may be chiefly subjective, affording virtually superhuman inward powers to the supplicant; (2) it is perhaps essentially magical and hence answered automatically without reference to God; (3) belief in the divine answer to prayer may have been so common-place that the author of I Maccabees neither elaborates the account nor mentions God. If one insist that the Jews, of all ancient peoples, protest against a magical interpretation of God's action in history, the second of these three possibilities can be ruled out. Jonathan does pour dirt upon his head and rend his clothes in the typical oriental style; but to say that is not to maintain that such rites were accompanied by magical connotations. He apparently offers no incantation and utters no magical formulae; hence, the mere absence in this episode of any references to God affords no justification for the assumption that the writer of I Maccabees deems prayer to be a magical, compulsory device for eliciting an automatic response either from divine sources or from nature. The fact that Jonathan does not sit idly by while his incantations prove effective suggests that he understands the essential elements of prayer. His words

are not recorded, but the author says that he "prayed" and not that he offered a magical sacrifice nor an incantation.

It is more likely that I Maccabees considers the answer to prayer to be subjective and inward, imparting divine courage and power to man in the presence of obstacles. At Jonathan's incredible victory, God does not intervene overtly, but furnishes immense strength to the warriors. Whatever fear the enemy experiences appears to rise not so much from some supernatural "Presence" but from the true courage and force of the Jews. Prayer, uttered openly, is rewarded inwardly. Neither because he feels supplication to be magical nor because he believes God to have no part in the victory does the author of I Maccabees omit all reference to Him. Any Jews, reading the story, would readily assume that the victory had come because God had heard the prayer; so the historian feels it unnecessary to mention that He has had a part in the outcome of the battle. Hence this obscure episode reveals much concerning the prayer-life of the Israelites. Prayer might be answered powerfully and certainly without being accompanied by miraculous or supernatural phenomena; also, the Jewish people were so certain that it was God, the Father of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who answered their petitions that His name sometimes need not even be mentioned as the One who brought into effect the wishes of the supplicant.

Although many petitions for victory or wisdom are answered by miraculous phenomena, numerous others, including that which we have studied in I Maccabees, describe less supernatural divine responses. It is to be expected that answers to prayers of penitence, forgiveness, and intercession should be accompanied by few unnatural phenomena. Most petitions are

answered in one of the three ways which have been suggested: (1) by direct intervention of the Hand of God; (2) by the intermediate action of a divine agent, angel or superman; (3) by the imparting of increased determination and courage to the supplicant. But the greater preponderance of the strict petitions, at least in the historical books of the Maccabees and the apocalypses of Baruch and IV Ezra, elicit miraculous responses, while the prayers of intercession, forgiveness, and repentance receive less supernatural answers.

But whatever the mode of divine response to man's fervent supplication, the intertestamental Jews reveal profound trust in the efficacy of their entreaties. The very number of prayers which are quoted or to which reference is made indicates a faith of great magnitude. Although innumerable passages exemplify this trust, two instances of it warrant examination because of their uniqueness, one because it suggests such deep faith that it borders closely upon magic, the other because it defines some of the conditions of effective supplication. In the Apocalypse of Baruch appear these words: "and ye women, pray not that ye may bear."[1] God has decreed a ruthless destruction for Israel, and conditions are to be so frightful that it were better if no more children are born to endure the tragedy. Therefore the prophet urges women to "pray not that ye may bear." Although of considerable obvious interest, these words assume truly vital significance when interpreted in the light of their theological implications. From one vantage point it is possible to view this injunction as implying a magical response to a petition for offspring. If women pray for sons, God will apparently fulfill their desire. But more! He will be compelled to do so; for, unless prayer force God

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[1]The Apocalypse of Baruch 10:13.

to act, no harm can come from beseeching Him. Can He not readily ignore a request? The implication of these words is that once a woman has prayed for sons, God must of necessity comply. From another point of view this command may be interpreted as a warning that God is refusing to grant children in spite of women's supplications. The Lord, seeing that the times are to be horrible, has determined that no offspring shall be born and is thus informing the women that their prayers will be futile. The would-be mothers might better conserve their breath. Obviously these two positions directly oppose one another. The author suggests either: (1) that, if women pray for offspring, God will be compelled, even against His Will, to supply them, or (2) that, by divine decree, supplications for children will not cajole God but will be futile. In the former, prayer becomes master of God, while in the latter, it is declared null and void. To the God-fearing Jew it would surely seem incredible that God should be compelled by a simple prayer to obey human wishes. On the other hand, the Israelites would believe it equally inconceivable that He should ever decree prayer to be so futile as to produce no response whatsoever. They had profound faith that whatsoever a man might desire could be obtained through prayer. Hence, this verse, caught as it is in a dilemma, discloses a profound trust in the outcome of a petition. While the Jews may not have thought prayer capable of forcing God to give them children, they at least believed that when one prays, even for progeny, he may expect to be heard. Supplication must, therefore, alter God's mind. Something real and important occurs when a man prays. Although God may think it unadvisable to fulfill some of the wishes of men, it is practically assured

that a divine answer will be forthcoming when these desires are formulated into prayers. Yet it is difficult to deny that some elements of magic enter into this particular warning against prayers for offspring.

Similarly, the Book of Judith rules out all magical aspects of prayer with the suggestion that the answer to a petition is conditional, not inevitable. During a siege of the city, Judith goes to the elders to offer her services and to warn them against tempting or cajoling God. They have threatened to surrender within five days if He has not meantime intervened to raise the siege. Warning that the Lord must not be compelled, Judith says: "Therefore, let us wait for the deliverance that comes from him, and call upon him to help us, and he will hear our cry if it please him."[1] Although the phrase "if it please him" may conceivably refer to the form and style of the prayer, such an interpretation is unlikely. It is inconsistent with Jewish teachings to affirm that God will answer a petition only if its structure and nature please him. More correct is it to say that God will answer prayer only when it pleases Him to do so, and not before. The crux of Judith's argument rests just there. God is not to be magically compelled. Israel may pray, but she must make no wagers or threats, for He will respond only when it pleases Him to do so. Hence prayer, according to this interpretation, must not be considered magic. Nevertheless, although God will only answer when He sees fit, the Book of Judith, whose plot centers around an answer to prayer, indicates that God frequently does respond, and faithfully.

It is further illuminating to investigate the relation between Jewish prayer and the various rites of sacrifice, penance, and almsgiving. "Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving were undoubtedly the three principle points of Jud-

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[1]The Book of Judith 8:17.

aistic piety, and those which stamped upon it its distinctive character."[1] Walker further attests to this relationship. "Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving were closely associated in the practice of these people."[2] Fasting was either an act of contrition for sin "or else an appeal at a time of distress for heavenly aid."[3] If a man had sinned, he might fast, but prayer must accompany that rite; hence the danger of "formalism" was avoided. "Fasting as adding a mark of real intensity to prayer was thought to increase merit and so to hasten the divine response."[4] Likewise, almsgiving was considered valid, says Walker, only so long as it was done prayerfully. If Walker's view is to be accepted, one may confidently assert that not only was there a close relationship between these three aspects of the religious life, but that prayer was the most fundamental, being the underlying condition for effective almsgiving and fasting. Such a contention is well-founded.

There are numerous indications that the rites in which the supplicants engage are actually little more than preparation for the reinforcement of effective prayer. The rites, by rendering a man worthy or by placing him in the proper attitude, make the divine response both more sudden and more certain. In the Book of Tobit, Raphael "sets prayer in its rightful position...,"[5] by asserting: "Prayer is good if accompanied with fasting, charity, and uprightness. A little with uprightness

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[1]William Fairweather, The Background of the Gospels (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 28.

[2]Walker, op. cit., p. 122. [3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 123. Cf. I Macc. 3:46f.; Test. of Jos. 10:2.

[5]Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., I., 198.

is better than much with wickedness."[1] Not only does this statement confirm the relationship between righteousness and prayer, but it boldly suggests that fasting and charity are equal to righteousness in importance. It is not that any of these rites are substitutes for prayer, but that, instead, the latter is more essential than the others. Prayer is not a supplement to the ritualistic observances, but exactly the reverse is implied. While praying is supreme, the rites which accompany this act are designed to supplement it or to make it more effective. I Esdras vividly illustrates the relation between prayer and fasting. The Jews, seeking a safe journey to Jerusalem, are afraid to ask the king for an escort because they have told him that God watches over His own and will protect them. So Ezra first proclaims a fast to seek protection from the Lord (8:50) and then, considering the fast to be insufficient, he prays: "And we prayed to our Lord again about these things, and we found him merciful."[2] Fasting is merely preliminary to the prayer. Concerning IV Ezra G. H. Box comments as follows:

> The Salathiel-Apocalypse ... consists of four visions. The first three of these are preceded each by a seven days' fast, after which the seer, usually in the form of a prefatory prayer followed by a debate, requests enlightenment as to various doubts and difficulties about which his mind is agitated (Cf. 5:13; 6:31,36).[3]

In the fourth of these cases, the angel specifically orders Ezra not to fast completely but to eat only the flowers of the field. "The Seer is bidden to go for seven days into a field, and to eat nothing but the flowers of the field; he is to pray continually; after that the angel will come to talk to him again."[4] The ritualistic observance is important, but the continuous prayer at least equals it in effectiveness and value.

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[1]The Book of Tobit 12:8. [2]I Esdras 8:53.

[3]G. H. Box, The Ezra-Apocalypse (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1912), p. 2.

[4]Oesterley, II Esdras, op. cit., p. 114.

The fasts preceding the first three visions of the Seer are followed but not accompanied by prayers, while the fourth--the partial fast--is accompanied by a continuous supplication. In the first three instances the fasting is a form of preparation for the prayers which follow; it is a technique for "cleansing" the supplicant, making him more worthy, his mood more prayerful, and his insight more penetrating. The conditions set forth by the angel call for both fasts and prayers. But in practice, the seven days of fasting actually precede the verbal petition and, because they make Ezra desperate and receptive, they prepare him for effective prayer. In the fourth vision, if it cannot be maintained that prayer is superior to the "semi-fast," it can be affirmed that the two are thought to be at least equal. The Book of Baruch, likewise, closely relates supplication and fasting in the words: "then they wept, and fasted, and prayed before the Lord."[1]

But it is not only to fasting and almsgiving that prayer is related. In Jonathan's letter to Sparta appear these words: "we therefore at all times without ceasing, both at our feasts, and on other convenient days, do remember you in the sacrifices which we offer, and in our prayers."[2] Besides suggesting that prayer, to be most effective, must be engaged in persistently, this verse implies that certain festivals and other special days are peculiarly appropriate for offering prayers. Not at fasts, but at feasts, are these petitions uttered. Furthermore, prayer and sacrifice are both offered on the same occasion and for parallel reasons. On these special days, therefore, ritualistic observances and prayer become complementary phenomena. Although it would be precarious to affirm that such

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[1] The Book of Baruch 1:5.

[2] I Maccabees 12:11.

prayers and sacrifices were held only on these special occasions, the stress upon "other convenient days" implies that some days are more appropriate than others for the observance of these rites. In fact, these "convenient days" were undoubtedly festive periods.

It was the same Jonathan, furthermore, who "rent his clothes, and put earth upon his head, and prayed."[1] The interpretation of his actions casts light upon the relation between penitential rites and prayer. Here again supplication is believed to be more effective when accompanied by ritualistic acts. Similarly, "Maccabeus and his men sprinkled earth on their heads and put sackcloth on their loins, and falling down upon the step before the altar begged him to favor them and be the enemy of their enemies."[2] But the Book of Judith contains one of the supreme examples of the interdependence of rites and prayers. Here the multitude joins in a rite of group penitence.

> And every man of Israel cried to God with great earnestness, and with great earnestness did they humble their souls. They, and their wives, and their babes, and their cattle, and every sojourner and hireling and servant bought with their money, put sackcloth upon their loins. And every man and woman of Israel, and the little children, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the temple, and cast ashes upon their heads, and spread out sackcloth before the Lord; and they put sackcloth about the altar; and they cried to the God of Israel earnestly and with one consent....And the Lord heard their voice, and looked upon their affliction: and the people continued fasting many days in all Judaea and Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty.[3]

In such an episode prayer plays a role inferior to that of the ritualistic observance. It is illuminating to observe this tendency toward formalism in the heart of one of the most prayer-centered books of the inter-testamental period. Throughout this long passage the word "prayer" is

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[1] I Maccabees 11:72. [2] II Maccabees 10:25f.

[3] The Book of Judith 4:9-13.

absent, while the rites are vividly described. The people "cried out" to God but such an act was probably thought to be effected more through the ritualistic observance than through the spoken prayer. Further, the populace continued fasting for days. Here rites were considered effective apart from prayer. Moreover, when Judith leaves the camp three nights consecutively to pray for guidance and protection, she first washes herself in the fountain, and only then, after she has emerged from the water, does she pray.[1] Whether there was any ritualistic connotation to this act may not be determined, but the fact that the formula was identical for each of the three nights is instructive.

Frequently during ritualistic observances and prayers the supplicant assumes certain more or less bizarre postures. The Jews are no exception. Many of their peculiar customs in this regard, however, can be more readily understood if the fact of their Oriental culture be remembered. In typical Eastern style Judas' men "fell on their faces and besought the Lord."[2] In III Maccabees the High-Priest Simon II, bowing his knees "before the holy place, and spreading out his hands in calm reverence, prayed."[3] Similarly, when the multitude supplicated, "they threw themselves on their faces, and took the babes from their breasts, and cried out with an exceedingly loud voice."[4] In the Assumption of Moses it is predicted that "there will enter one who is over them, and he will spread forth his hands, and kneel upon his knees and pray on their behalf."[5] I Esdras, describing Ezra's posture while praying, presents a confusing picture. Prior to the supplication, the Seer rends his clothes and holy

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[1]The Book of Judith 12:8f.

[2]II Maccabees 10:4.

[3]III Maccabees 2:1.

[4]III Maccabees 5:51.

[5]The Assumption of Moses 4:1.

garments, plucks the hair from his head and beard, and sits down. Then, after the evening sacrifice, he rises, bends his knees, stretches forth his hands unto the Lord and prays.[1] But in 9:91, after the prayer has been completed, we are given a contradictory account: "And...Esdras in his prayer made his confession, weeping, and lying flat upon the ground before the people."[2] And finally, the Book of Jubilees describes the posture of Moses at prayer, saying that he "fell on his face and prayed."[3] From the diversity of these postures, it is apparent that few fixed rules applied and that considerable flexibility and freedom were permitted. A supplicant may prostrate himself, stretch forth his hands, or kneel.

In almost every instance, therefore, the ritualistic observances are not regarded as self-sufficient nor as substitutes for prayer, but are considered merely supplementary and preparatory to effective supplication. In all but a few cases, the ritualistic observances are listed first in the passage; only then is the fact that prayer was offered either openly affirmed or merely implied. The following formula is typical: And he rent his garments, poured earth upon his head, offered a sacrifice and prayed. Prayer usually comes last in the list.[4] As the final and culminating act in a long series of ritualistic observances, the offering of prayer marks the summit of the whole experience. Therefore, when the writers enumerate the various acts, prayer is placed at the end of the list. Only IV Ezra 6:31 and the Book of Judith 4:9-13 present noteworthy examples of the contrary principle. In these instances, the fact that Israel

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[1] I Esdras 8:74-90.

[2] I Esdras 9:91.

[3] The Book of Jubilees 1:19.

[4] Cf. I Macc. 3:47-53; 11:71; 12:11; Apoc. of Bar. 20:5; II Macc. 10:26.

prayed is mentioned prior to the fact that she engaged in rites. IV Ezra asserts: "If therefore thou wilt pray yet again, and fast seven days more, I shall yet tell thee greater things than these."[1] Likewise, the Book of Judith asserts that at the outset, before they fasted, Israel "cried to God with great earnestness."[2] The passage is somewhat ambiguous, however. The word "prayer" does not occur in the phrase quoted, but appears three verses later. The section intervening between 4:9 and 4:12 describes Jewish rites of penitence. Therefore, Israel first calls upon the Lord, then humiliates herself in ashes and sackcloth, and finally prays. Rites precede the supplication. The IV Ezra reference is also not as clear-cut as it appears. The angel instructs Ezra to pray and fast, but actually he fasts first, then prays.[3] With these two doubtful exceptions, prayer is placed last in the list of the observances in which the supplicant engages. He takes part in the rites before he prays, not afterward. Although this is not conclusive proof that rites are considered only secondary to prayer, when we recall that some prayers are not accompanied by ritualistic observances at all and that rarely are rites ever engaged in apart from some form of supplication, it may be affirmed that prayer is usually considered primary. If rites never occur alone, and if prayers are not dependent upon them, the petitions are more important than the observances which accompany them.

Furthermore, sacrifice, another of the important Jewish rites, often

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[1] IV Ezra 6:31.

[2] The Book of Judith 4:9.

[3] Cf. IV Ezra 6:31.

exists alongside prayer. Before the Exile, the old purification rituals were dominant, prayer playing a relatively minor role in the religious life. During the years spent in Babylon away from the ancient Temple and priesthood, new worship-forms appeared. In a foreign land the Jews could bring no bloody sacrifices to Yahweh; yet they felt impelled to offer praise and adoration to the God of their fathers; hence when they assembled in religious fellowship, they evolved a non-sacrificial, highly spiritual congregational worship. After the return from Babylon, the Temple became again the center of religious life; and the traditional sacrificial system was revived. But the more spiritualized public worship, the service of preaching and prayer, could not be entirely supplanted by the return to ancient forms. "The post-exilic religion reveals side by side the old sacrificial cult and the new spiritual worship of the Word and prayer."[1] Only after 70 A.D. did the old sacrificial worship completely disappear.[2] Hence, during the intertestamental period, prayer did not stand alone as the only method of approaching God, for the ancient sacrifices continued.

Yet, many of the congregational prayers which evolved during the Exile were not of the spontaneous, prophetic type apparent in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. In Babylon, there was a notable rise of liturgical prayers. Likewise, the "Levites" developed the art of music and song; they led in the service of song when the congregations met in the Exile, and stood by Ezra's side to open with prayers and hymns at the assemblage

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[1]Friedrich Heiler, Prayer, trans. and edited by Samuel McComb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 299.

[2]Ibid.

where Ezra read the Book of the Law.[1] These men, later called "Hasidim," rose to positions of major influence.[2] It is said of them:

> And especially in later days was their piety manifest in prayer. For the art of public or common prayer in the devotional assemblies is unknown before the Exile, and conspicuous after the Exile; the extra-canonical literature of this later period being filled with such prayers (e.g., 'The Prayer of Manasses').[3]

From this quotation it does not follow that all public prayers were of the liturgical style, for Booth includes even the Prayer of Manasses as an example of the type to which he refers. Hence, many supplications of the Hasidim were spontaneous and original. Yet others were formal and liturgical; undoubtedly the prayers of some of these Hasidim were later written down to be employed as daily prayers. These "Men of Prayer" often furnished the example, therefore, for the formal supplications which found their way into the Prayer Book and were repeated daily in the synagogue and Temple worship.

Thus there were several divergent trends in the devotional life of the Jews during our period. Sacrifice, liturgical prayers, spontaneous prayers, ran parallel to one another. In later times, the sacrificial rites and many of the spontaneous supplications became less prominent, while the formal ones were adopted as the characteristic mode of worship. But even in their heyday, the more oratoric, spontaneous prayers, even though considered efficacious in themselves, were rarely unaccompanied by some form of ritual as a preparation for or supplement to them. M. H. Harris has carefully summarized the nature of these rites:

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[1]Nehemiah 9:5; 8:4-9.

[2]Henry Kendall Booth, The Bridge between the Centuries (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 42.

[3]Ibid.

> It was customary in prayer to turn toward the Temple at Jerusalem (I Kings viii. 38; II Chron. vi. 34; Dan. vi. 11); this attitude may even have been considered necessary to give validity to the prayer. The Israelites prayed both standing and kneeling. Fasting and weeping were not unusual accompaniments of petition and confession, and occasionally, in times of great distress, sackcloth and ashes were added, and even rending of the mantle and shaving of the head (Job i. 20).[1]

Therefore, whether the supplicant offered his petition formally through the sacrifice or the ritualistic prayer, or whether he offered it spontaneously as an original, prophetic prayer, considerable formalism and often legalism accompanied the supplication.

Related to these problems is the discussion of the synagogue and prayer. The new place of meeting, the synagogue, tended, during the post-Exilic period, to undermine the ancient formalism and emphasis upon the Jerusalem Temple. The Synagogue having become both school and church, was the place for the common people to come and praise God. "It created also a new conception of worship, in accordance with which prayer took the place of animal sacrifices, and spiritual edification was derived from the study of God's Word."[2] Fairweather points out that the synagogue "served the important purpose of being a house of prayer in which pious hearts could hold fellowship with God apart from any priestly ritual."[3] Though eventually most of the synagogue prayers were to become formal, some of them were beautiful private and original supplications. Yet, in at least one specific case, even the Temple at Jerusalem was referred to as a house of prayer. While during the canonical period it is at least once called "the house of prayer" (Cf. Second Isaiah)," the one

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[1]Harris, op. cit., p. 165.

[2]Fairweather, op. cit., p. 27.

[3]Ibid., p. 26.

[4]Isaiah 56:7.

reference to it as such in the intertestamental literature is in I Maccabees. Nicanor, we learn, has threatened to destroy the Temple if Judas is not turned over to him. The priests thereupon beseech God for vengeance and, while praying, say "You chose this house to bear your name to be a house for prayer and petition for your people."[1] Such a reference suggests either that the ritualistic observances held in the Temple were thought of as "prayers" by the priests, or that in addition to the regular rites, actual formal or informal prayers were there uttered. Both of these suggestions are highly important. If the sacrificial acts are called "prayers," further light is shed upon the meaning and number of supplications during the period, for alongside the informal and formal supplications a new type of prayer will then take its place: i.e., sacrificial prayer. If the sacrificial rites themselves be called "prayers," the word is used loosely. Supplications are generally verbal, but to entitle the silent observance of a sacrifice a "prayer" is to give a fresh definition of the term. The function of a sacrifice is, nevertheless, similar to that of a prayer. On the other hand, if regular prayers were uttered in the Temple, the synagogue was not the exclusive place of prayer. During the intertestamental period priests more than once offered prayers within the walls of the Temple. The very prayer to which we have referred, i.e., that of the priests for protection against Nicanor, was offered before the Temple altar. There was, therefore, the closest of relationships between prayer and ritual, whether in the Temple, the synagogue, the home, or the battlefield.

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[1] I Maccabees 7:37.

Another minor theological problem arises from the question: Who offers the prayer? In the preponderance of cases, some temporal or spiritual leader utters the actual words of petition. Frequently it is Judas or Jonathan praying in behalf of their soldiers for victory. Other times it is the Hasidim praying before the people at worship. Even the spiritual leaders, the priests, often offer the supplications. Already we have observed numerous instances where the Maccabees prayed for their man, and have seen that the Hasidim not only originated many prayers, but uttered the petitions on the day that Ezra restored the Temple worship. Although a relatively unique phenomenon, there are also two instances in I Maccabees where the high priest prays. In I Maccabees 7:36-38 it is the priests who seek vengeance against Nicanor, and who, without even offering a sacrifice, pray for succour. Actually, their utterance is more of a wail than a prayer, but because it is directed to God, it warrants its title. In I Maccabees 11:72 Jonathan, the Captain of the army, and in III Maccabees 2:1-20 Simon II, the High-priest, pray. It is the political and spiritual leaders, therefore, who most frequently pray for the common man.

But at least once a mass prayer, engaged in by the Jewish multitude, occurs. When Ptolemy attempts to enter the holy of holies, the entire populace urges him to refrain. The priests are the first to fall down before God in search of help, only to be followed by virgins, mothers, and the entire "multitude." It is a boisterous scene in which the bolder citizens suggest taking up arms against the intruder but are deterred by the elders and priests. Other Jews join in with lamentations, covering their hair with ashes and dust. Such a moving spectacle

is it that the author says:

> So incessant and vehement was the united cry of the multitude that an indescribable uproar arose. For it might have been thought that not only the people, but even the walls and the whole pavement were crying out, since all preferred death to the profanation of the holy place.[1]

All men may, therefore, offer prayer, but in most of the recorded instances, it is the leader who does so. The preponderance of petitions by the leaders in behalf of the people does not, nevertheless, make imperative the conclusion that prayer was more common among the former than among the latter. Because few stories were written about the non-heroic unnamed multitudes, no one can today determine how many common men and women prayed in their homes and in their synagogue. Any supplications they may have offered are nowhere recorded. We must not conclude that mass prayers and individual petitions were, therefore, unknown. Instead, many allusions suggest that any man could pray.

Hence, in regard to prayer, there was considerable universalism. Not only might any one pray, but a supplicant could include men to other races and nations in his petitions. When Jonathan sends a letter to the Spartans asking for renewal of their friendship, he exemplifies this principle. In the communication are the words quoted above: "We therefore at all times without ceasing, both at our feasts, and on other convenient days, do remember you in the sacrifices we offer, and in our prayers, as it is right and meet to be mindful of brethren...."[2] Although the contents of the original letter were probably not as they are presented

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[1] III Maccabees 1:28f.

[2] I Maccabees 12:11.

here and may not accurately describe Jonathan's beliefs, the author of I Maccabees recognizes the universalism of prayer. Indeed, it is not impossible that the original letter contained some clear-cut statement of the comprehensive and inclusive nature of supplication. Prayer also at least once assumes a universalistic character in IV Ezra. Oesterley says in reference to a supplication in IV Ezra 8:6-18: "It will be noticed here that the Seer prays for humanity in general, a universalistic note which is by no means always found in our book."[1] Such prayers imply (1) that God exercizes jurisdiction over nations and peoples other than Israel; (2) that He responds to the prayers of one people for another.

Reinforcing our contention that there were, even during this period of Jewish exclusiveness, striking illustrations of universalism, is Skinner's assertion that petitions could be uttered anywhere. Even in pre-prophetic Israel, the Hebrews had learned that the offering of prayer was not limited to any geographical region. In a Phoenecian town Elijah, for instance, produces a miracle by the power of prayer to YHWH (I Kings 17:20 ff.).[2] After the Exile and the beginnings of the Diaspora, such an emphasis presumably became greater. No matter where the Jews were, they felt free to pray to their God. Nevertheless, the Temple and the synagogue were never replaced as houses of prayer. The Jews apparently believed that God hears entreaties more easily and more certainly when they are uttered in such places.

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[1]Oesterley, II Esdras, op. cit., p. 99.

[2]John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922), p. 289.

A passage in IV Ezra confronts us with another theological problem of some import. The majority of prayers which we have observed have been verbal, but in IV Ezra 9:29-38 appears an exception; for the supplication here described takes the form of a silent meditation. When Ezra begins his address to God, he exclaims, "Then my mouth was opened, and I began to speak to the Most High," but he concludes with the words, "When I said this to myself"[1] or "When I spake these things in my heart."[2] Although these verses are apparently inconsistent, there are several reasons for assuming that Ezra has here engaged in a silent prayer. Oesterley recognizes the episode as a meditation when he says, "The seer, in the middle of his meditation, suddenly becomes aware of the presence of a woman,"[3] while Ezra himself remarks in 10:5, "Then left I the meditations wherein I was." Actually, references to any such meditations elsewhere in this literature are rare. Conceivably, other prayers may have been unspoken and were for various reasons not called "meditations." But under most of the conditions which we have observed, the prayers are both public and audible. Some supplications in Judith and Tobit are not uttered publicly, and it is possible that they are silent prayers, but no suggestion of that fact is made. Only in this one instance is a true meditation actually called such.

Not only were prayers spoken, but they must be uttered in the Hebrew language. It was believed that the intercessory angels could speak only the ancient and traditional Hebrew tongue. "It is therefore essential

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[1]Goodspeed's Translation. [2]The English Revised Version

[3]Oesterley, II Esdras, op. cit., p. 118.

that prayers should be offered up in this language, otherwise the angels will not be able to carry the petitions before the Almighty...."[1] In Shabbath 12b it is commanded, therefore, that prayers be uttered only in Hebrew.[2] If this contention of Oesterley's is well-founded, it has interesting implications for the previously outlined problem of universalism. All Jews may pray, but what will be the lot of foreign nations, or of those Jews who have become so Hellenized as a consequence of the Diaspora that they no longer speak the ancient mother tongue? If the petition must be made in Hebrew before the angels can properly intercede for the supplicant, one or the other of two conclusions is inevitable: (1) either all men except Jews are excluded from prayer; (2) or the non-Jewish supplicant may pray but without the benefit of intercession from the Hebrew-speaking angels. Although several intertestamental writers believed that prayer offered directly to God might be effective , most Jews thought it a decided advantage to have the intercession of the heavenly hosts as support for the plea. But at all events, any suggestion that prayer is limited and bounded by certain language requirements is evidence of provincialism.

One concluding theological issue requires investigation. Once in this intertestamental literature, (Enoch 70:1-4), a petition is uttered not to God, but to the immortal, ascended Enoch. While the latter is in heaven, Noah prays to him from the earth below. "To Enoch in this place

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[1] W. O. E. Oesterley, Judaism and Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937) I., 200

[2] Ibid.

Noah prayed and from him received a message concerning the flood and an assurance of his own preservation therefrom. By prayer such as he were still accessible to the seeking soul on earth...."[1] Such a statement implies that (1) prayers need not always be directed to God; (2) the patriarchs were still available for the earnest supplicant needing advice and succour; (3) the heavenly patriarch might actually communicate with the human supplicant. If this principle were carried to its limit, either a form of ancestor-worship might be produced, or God might be considered so transcendent that human intercessors alone could and would answer prayer. Fortunately , this type of prayer to a patriarch is the exception rather than the rule. It was commonly thought that departed heroes acted as intercessors for their earthly descendants, but this Enoch reference nowhere indicates that the patriarch interceded for Noah. Instead, he responded directly to the petition, answering it himself without reference to God. Beyond doubt this peculiar passage, coming as it does in a Noah fragment, is an abberation. Other prayers directed to patriarchs were expressly based upon the hope that intercession would follow. Only in this case do we have an exception.

To attempt to summarize the prayer-life of these people is to attempt the precarious. W. O. E. Oesterley, whose recently published work The Jews and Judaism during the Greek Period has come into my hands since the conclusion of the bulk of this paper, presents a form of summary. He classifies supplications under the headings of "prayers for things spiritual," "prayers for temporal wants," and "intercessory

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[1]Walker, op. cit., p. 133.

prayers;" then he concludes with a brief discussion of the Jew's belief in the efficacy of prayer. Although Oesterley's discussion is limited by its brevity and its reference solely to the Greek period of Judaism, it makes some astute suggestions. Immediately before describing the frequency of prayers for spiritual things, Oesterley says: "We draw attention... to the subject of private prayer, the frequent mention of which shows how great a part it must have played in the lives of all right-minded men."[1] He concludes the section with the words: "These illustrations...bear ample witness to the way in which prayer, in all circumstances of life, was general among those to whom religion was a reality."[2] With these words we are compelled to agree. The Jews did petition God continually. Not only in the Greek period, but in the subsequent age which is omitted in Oesterley's account men constantly prayed. The plots of the Books of Judith and Tobit hinge upon supplications. The Prayer of Manasseh and the Song of the Three Children are entire works that are prayers in themselves. Whether it be the historical books of the Maccabees, the wisdom literature of Ben Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, the apocalyptic writings of Enoch and IV Ezra, or the commentaries upon the ancient writings, i.e., Jubilees and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, prayers are central. Perhaps more than in either the Old Testament or the New, supplications are essential to intertestamental literature.

But it is precarious to generalize further. Throughout this era con-

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[1] W. O. E. Oesterley, The Jews and Judaism during the Greek Period (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1941) p. 220.

[2] Ibid., p. 222.

cepts concerning the origin of evil, the nature of the Messianic Kingdom, and the function and nature of angels show a somewhat marked development. It was a formative period. But prayer-life appears to have exhibited little true development. Some of the earliest prayers of the period are as lovely as any of those toward its close. In numerous ways the petitions uttered by Tobias and Judith show as sterling structure, rhetoric, and religious faith as do any of those in IV Ezra or the Apocalypse of Baruch. We have observed a similarity of excellence in the Prayer of Manasseh and the glorious supplication of the eighth chapter of IV Ezra, nearly two-hundred years later. In structure, form, and design, therefore, few clear-cut lines of development are evident. The supplications of the later books tend to be longer, but even here generalizations must be made cautiously. The prayer which, according to I Esdras--written 150 B.C.--, Ezra uttered when he was told that Israel had taken foreign wives is as long as any of those in IV Ezra or the Apocalypse of Baruch, two-hundred and fifty years later. In the literature composed at about the middle of our period, prayers are somewhat shorter, for First and Second Maccabees contain no really long prayers. Yet the Prayer of Manasseh, composed at approximately the same period, is as lengthy as any prayer of the era. There thus are few established lines of either development or retrogression in form, length, and structure of intertestamental prayers. In the light of the vast changes in other avenues of their thought, this relative stability is unique.

From an observation of certain omissions in this literature several tentative conclusions may be reached. We have seen that petitions might be

uttered for almost any object. Yet prayers of thanksgiving are not as numerous as one might expect. Prayers for temporal, mundane things are prominent, and there are several supplications which are essentially praise, but pure thanksgiving is a comparatively late development in prayer-life. Therefore, from the surface it seems apparent that this element of Jewish personal religion was not full-grown during the inter-testamental period. Nevertheless, the Song of the Three Children is essentially a prayer of thanks, while the supplication uttered by Judith at the close of the book bearing her name is decidedly a thanksgiving. Hence, even here few generalities may be permitted. Nearly all forms of prayer-life were highly developed in intertestamental times. Further, it cannot be shown that prayers are more common in one type of literature than in another. In legalistic writings the supplications tend to be liturgical, just as in the apocalypses they tend toward transcendentalism and mysticism. In fact, the form of the prayer is largely determined by the nature and purpose of the writing in which it is imbedded. Yet in all types of literature we may expect to find supplications of some kind. We are forced, therefore, to draw only one conclusion, one which is fundamentally important. The intertestamental Jews may be said to have had such profound faith in the efficacy of prayer that they prayed for one-another and for themselves at all times and for all things.

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